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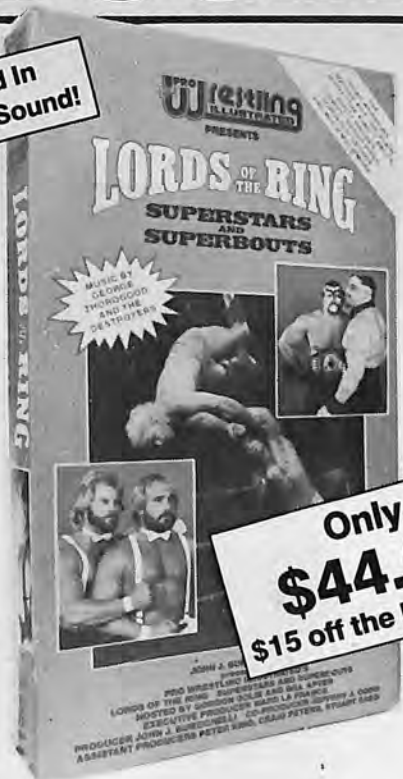
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YOUR LETTERS

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DON'T SAY SNAKE ...

I just finished the cover story on Andre the Giant vs. Jake Roberts in your March 1989 issue ("Scared Stiff: 'Don't Say Snake!'"). I must say it provided me with a really good laugh, if nothing else.

The very idea that the skinny, 246-pound Roberts has a ghost of a chance against the 500-pound Andre is the most patently ridiculous idea

I've ever heard! Sure, Andre seems to be deathly afraid of Damien, but Damien doesn't wrestle—*Roberts* does. And there's no way Roberts can even get the big man off his feet.

I've seen quite a few matches between Roberts and Andre, and the Giant has won every one of them. In the few in which Roberts didn't get pinned, he ran to his bag and brought out Damien, which led to his

immediate disqualification.

Don't get me wrong—I hate Andre as much as anybody. But the fact that Roberts brings a snake to the ring with him is a situation that can't be condoned. Every time Roberts gets mashed by Andre, he's only getting what's coming to him.

Forget about it, Jake! You thought you won the battle against Andre when he passed out in fear, but who's winning the war now?

JOHN GRIFFIN
Oak Hill, NY



Bobby Heenan attends to Andre the Giant; the Giant fainted when Jake Roberts threw his snake on him. The snake gives Roberts a psychological edge in their feud.

... SAY JAKE!

It's high time somebody put the fear of God into Andre the Giant. I, for one, am getting pretty sick and tired of seeing this grotesque monstrosity lumber around the ring doing a pathetic imitation of a professional wrestler. Thank goodness for Jake Roberts and his snake! Anyone who can make Andre actually run from the ring deserves more praise than I could ever express.

I hope Andre puts Damien around Andre's neck again and again. During *Saturday Night's Main Event*, I thought for sure that Andre had had a heart attack, but as it turned out he only fainted. Would it be too much to ask that he could soon be scared

right out of the sport for the rest of his life? A few more Roberts-Andre matches ought to do the trick.

I hope the WWF realizes it has a good thing going here. One of these days, Andre is going to run out of the ring, head straight out of the arena, and get out of wrestling for good—and we'll all have Jake Roberts to thank for it!

BILLY KRAUSZ
Oklahoma City



Bam Bam Bigelow applies a side headlock on Barry Windham. Reader Mark Halter thinks Bigelow should rethink his career goals.

A BAM BAM PLAN

An open letter to Bam Bam Bigelow:

I have followed your career from your CWA days to your entry in the NWA right through your latest matches. Without a doubt, you are one of the best wrestlers in the world, combining strength, speed, and agility.

You have always been one of my favorite wrestlers, but now I think you're making a mistake by going after Ric Flair and Barry Windham. Flair is the greatest champion ever. He has beaten every contender from every organization. And Windham is rapidly becoming as good as Flair!

You're also setting yourself up for a feud with The Road Warriors. I think you should question your manager, Oliver Humperdink, about this situation. Maybe you should have a talk

with J.J. Dillon about the possibility of becoming a Horseman. It's for your own good!

MARK HALTER
Redwood Falls, MN

THE NEXT GENERATION

I've just seen the Kendall Windham-Dustin Rhodes tag team for the first time. Talk about the next generation of wrestling! These guys surely have the potential to be great, and with a little bit of working and training together they will certainly be a force to reckon with.

We would still like to see Dustin team with his father, Dusty Rhodes, but he seemed to pick the right partner when he chose Kendall. They are both young and can grow together

into a fine, championship-caliber team.

Look for these two to start gathering tag team titles!

COLEEN KEATING
JASON ANDERSON
Kirkland, WA

AN OPEN SECRET

It's nice to see one of the greatest wrestlers in the world, Jeff Jarrett, finally get some recognition in your March 1989 issue ("Blood, Belts, And Broken Friendships: Jeff Jarrett Comes Of Age!"). It's nice to know that the rest of the world is finding out what fans in Tennessee and Kentucky have known for two years. Jarrett has truly become one of the finest all-around wrestlers in the
(Continued on page 44)



As The Texas Broncos, Dustin Rhodes and Kendall Windham have been an effective tag team, despite the differences between Dusty Rhodes and Barry Windham.

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

By BILL APTER

NWA WORLD CHAMPION **Ric Flair** has shocked the NWA by unceremoniously dumping **J.J. Dillon**, his longtime manager!

Dillon's dismissal occurred on January 24, six days after a nationally televised tag team match pitting Flair and U.S. champion **Barry Windham** against **Eddie Gilbert** and a "mystery partner." The man, billed as "**Mr. X**," turned out to be **Rick Steamboat**, who dominated Flair and Windham throughout the bout, eventually scoring the winning pinfall over Flair following a flying bodypress from the top rope.

"This was the biggest embarrassment of my career," screamed a livid Flair as he made the announcement. "Dillon is supposed to prevent situations like this from happening. How could he let us wrestle against a man like Steamboat without the proper preparations? Dillon put my name on that contract—I never signed *anything*. Dillon failed me, and now he's fired! He's out of my career forever."

Dillon reacted to his firing by departing the NWA, which leaves both Flair and Windham without a



J.J. Dillon has been fired by Ric Flair! The "Nature Boy" dumped his longtime manager after Rick Steamboat pinned Flair in a nationally televised tag team match.

manager. It also effectively ends **The Four Horsemen**, the rule-breaking organization founded by Dillon in 1986.

In a related development, the NWA reported that **Hiro Matsuda** is on the verge of purchasing Flair's contract. The veteran Japanese star, who helped train **Lex Luger** before his pro debut, claims he has come into millions of dollars through shrewd business investments, and boasts that his goal is to build an army of top wrestlers.

"Japanese business is taking over the world," said Matsuda.

"My country already owns most of the United States, thanks to our shrewd financial acumen. Now, the NWA will be next. I will not rest until I control the entire federation. Flair would be very foolish not to take advantage of this offer."

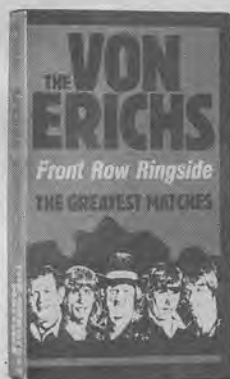
In an equally shocking development, **Jerry Lawler** has been stripped of the AWA World heavyweight title—and has been banned for life from the federation! AWA President **Stanley Blackburn** took action against "The King" after Lawler missed seven mandatory title defenses.

(Continued on page 48)



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SOLDAT USTINOV IS no lover of liberty, but he is a curious fellow, eager to learn as much as possible about the country in which he makes a living. So it wasn't too much of a surprise here at *The Wrestler* when we heard that Ustinov planned to attend the inauguration of George Bush in Washington. The surprise was that he wanted me to accompany him.

"Rodriguez!" Ustinov barked over the phone. "Did not you once tell me you worked in Washington?" About a year ago in casual conversation I had mentioned to Ustinov that I interned in a congresswoman's office back in my college days.

"Good," Ustinov said. "You can tell me what this inauguration business is all about. Meet me at train station in Washington on Friday morning."

So on the cool Friday morning of January 20th, I boarded an Amtrak Metroliner from New York to Washington's Union Station. Ustinov met me on the platform.

"Comrade, welcome," he greeted. "I am glad you could join me. I have big day planned for us."

Our first stop was along the route of the procession to the Capitol for the swearing-in ceremony. We got there an hour early, but the crowd was already overwhelming. A little boy must have recog-

nized Ustinov, because he started crying.

"Why does he cry for, Andy?" Ustinov asked innocently. "Soldat

WIN LOSE OR DRAW

BY ANDY RODRIGUEZ



Soldat Ustinov is a loyal Soviet citizen, but he wanted to see George Bush's Inauguration. He even asked Andy Rodriguez to go with him.

never hurt anyone. I am nice guy."

"The hell you are!" shot back a man who must have been the boy's father. "My son cries like this every time he sees you on TV. You break every rule in the book. Boy I'd love to see Wahoo McDaniel clean your clock, buddy."

"Shut your face, American!" Ustinov yelled. "See what happens, Rodriguez? I come here to see your new President and look at abuse I take. I don't need this."

Ustinov started to walk away, but I grabbed his coat.

"Calm down," I said. "How do you expect these people to react? You're a full-fledged rulebreaker. Besides, I didn't come all the way down here for you to leave before this thing even starts."

"Very well," Ustinov answered. "I will stay, but why must these Americans be so rude? I just came to see their President."

As the procession wended its way toward the Capitol, Ustinov would occasionally ask the identity of one or another Government official. "How nice," he said. "Mr. Bush brought his mother here."

I patiently explained to Ustinov that the woman at Bush's side was his wife, Barbara, not his mother.

"Oh, I am sorry," Ustinov apologized. "I did not know." The
(Continued on page 52)



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BY BOB SMITH

THE GREATEST

THE FUNNIEST MOVIE of 1988 had to be *The Naked Gun*, that raucous parody of police dramas. One of the film's funniest scenes occurs when Lt. Frank Drebin, perfectly overplayed by Leslie Nielsen, sneaks onto the baseball field at Anaheim Stadium in order to catch the bad guys.

Drebin poses as the home-plate umpire during a California Angels game in order to find out which ballplayer is plotting to murder Queen Elizabeth, who happens to be at the park that day. Naturally, he gets a bit too involved in calling the balls and strikes. He eventually gets into an argument with the other umpires—and ejects them from the game! It's a crazy, surreal scene that bears little resemblance to real life—unless you happen to watch WWF wrestling. There's a similar situation going on in the federation right now, but it's not funny at all.

Earl Hebner is back! The evil twin referee—the major culprit in Andre the Giant's stealing of the World title from Hulk Hogan on February 5, 1988—has returned. Earl's actions on that date are already a legendary part of wrestling folklore. It was a disgusting scene that has never been adequately addressed by WWF officials.

Hebner counted the pinfall on Hogan even though the champion clearly lifted his left shoulder at the count of one. Hogan watched in horror as Hebner awarded the belt to Andre, who promptly gave the belt to Ted DiBiase, the man who wanted to buy it from him.

The most amazing situation was still to occur, however. The man who was assigned to officiate the match was Dave Hebner, Earl's twin brother, who ran into the ring and began arguing with Earl. Which one was which? Few could tell. To this day, the mess has yet to be cleaned up by the WWF.

WWF President Jack Tunney stripped DiBiase of the belt a week later, but he failed to mention *anything* about the Hebners. It was claimed on various WWF TV shows that the *real* Dave Hebner had been fingerprinted, and we were assured that we'd never see ol' evil Earl preside over a match again.

Until now. At the January WWF card at New York's Nassau Coliseum—on Friday the 13th, no less!—the ring announcer proclaimed that *Earl* Hebner was one of the referees for that evening's action. Sure enough, there he was, arbiting the match as The Ultimate Warrior wrestled King Haku for the Intercontinental title.

Granted, it's tough to tell Dave and Earl apart—they're nearly identical. But how could the WWF completely forget about Earl's checkered past? The biggest rumor going around is that DiBiase has allegedly thrown his immense wealth in the direction of Tunney, who has allowed Earl to referee once again. Another hot story says that Hebner is gearing up for yet another miscarriage of justice against a major titleholder.

Even if those rumors prove to be unfounded, this is still a situation that any federation worth its salt should be ashamed of. Allowing Earl Hebner to referee their matches proves that WWF officials are either completely stupid or amazingly ignorant about the recent past.

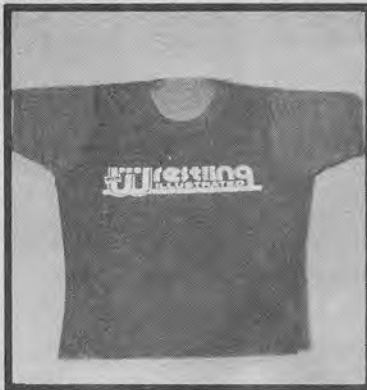
First, Danny Davis stole the tag title from The British Bulldogs in 1987. Then, Earl Hebner robbed Hulk Hogan of the World title in 1988. Who will be the next bogus referee to sink the WWF into further embarrassment during 1989?

Where's Frank Drebin when you need him? □



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Thumbs Up

Each issue, *The Wrestler* will praise the noteworthy and damn those who violate the honor of wrestling. The praiseworthy receive a Thumbs Up, the disgraceful are marked with a Thumbs Down. Here is this month's roll of honor and shame.



Thumbs Up to John Studd. The big man is back! Studd let the whole world know that his comeback is for real when he eliminated Ted DiBiase to win the WWF's prestigious Royal Rumble on January 15 in Houston. Studd, obviously tired of trying his luck in other sports (he proved no match for fashion designer and octogenarian Oleg Cassini in a series of harness racing celebrity races), has come back with a vengeance and is out to prove he can make it on his own. Big John dumped former manager Bobby Heenan—another good move—and appears primed for a return to the top of the game.



Thumbs Up to Sid Vicious. Why did Vicious lose the CWA title to Wendell Cooley? One possible answer: bad advice. Certainly, Cooley is a fine wrestler with plenty of ring experience, but Vicious is thought by many observers to be "the next Hulk Hogan." He is a huge man with unbelievable potential—potential Jimmy Golden and Robert Fuller were holding back. When Vicious accused Fuller and Golden of manipulating him, he was probably right. Vicious took a beating at the hands of Fuller and Golden, but it was worth it: That beating knocked Sid back on the right track.

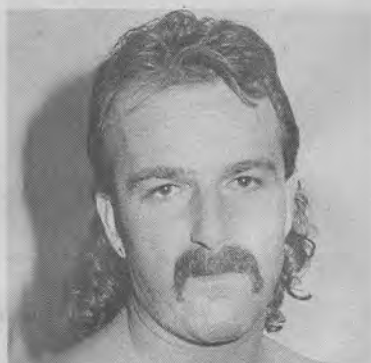


Thumbs Up to Wendi Richter. Who's the real world champion: Jerry Lawler, Ric Flair, or Randy Savage? The debate can go on forever, but an absolute conclusion will never be reached. On the women's side, however, it's pretty easy to see that Wendi Richter is *the* world women's champion. Sure, there are other champs, but who else holds the AWA, WWC, and NWF belts? Who else defends her titles all over the United States and Puerto Rico? Richter has proven herself over and over again. In our book, she's the best.



Thumbs Up to Rick Steamboat. A tip of the cap and a pat on the back to "The Dragon," whose return to the sport after a nine-month absence was the best news we've heard in a long time. The fact that he's going back to the NWA and not the WWF is even better news. What this sport needs is an intense Steamboat-Ric Flair feud to show everyone what kind of excitement pure *wrestling* can generate. These two outstanding athletes have already squared off in some of the sport's greatest matches ever. Call us greedy: we can't wait for more!

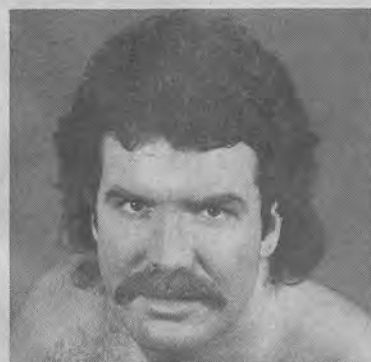
Thumbs Down



Thumbs Down to Jake Roberts. The most outlandishly foul act of the WWF's Royal Rumble was carried out by "The Snake." Jake had already been eliminated by Andre the Giant, but returned to the ring four minutes later, bag in hand, and tossed his pet boa constrictor Damien into the ring. Andre, whose fear of snakes has already been well-documented, stood frozen in fear before finally dumping himself over the ropes. By any standards, Jake's action was illegal and unsportsmanlike. He should be suspended for unduly influencing the outcome of the match.



Thumbs Down to Rick Morton. As special guest referee in Jerry Lawler's AWA World/World Class title defense against Dutch Mantel, Morton succeeded in: A) destroying his integrity as a referee for future matches; B) losing the respect of the fans who have cheered him for so many years; and C) tinkering with the integrity of both important belts. Fortunately, AWA, CWA, and World Class officials returned both titles to Lawler, but that doesn't absolve Morton of the crime. He was bought off. He was a biased referee. He let us down.



Thumbs Down to Scott Hall. What's going on here? Yet another act of unsportsmanlike conduct was carried out recently by a man loved by the fans. In this case, Hall, U.S. Steel, and The Terminator were in a round-robin tournament to pick a top contender to Florida champ Mike Graham. U.S. Steel won, but Hall didn't take the loss easily. During Steel's match against Graham, Hall stormed the ring and caused Steel's disqualification. Hall and Steel are now involved in a violent feud, but Steel can never regain what Hall cost him: a shot at a prized championship belt.



Thumbs Down to Bobby Heenan. Finally, a thumbs down to a person who's spent his entire career spreading evil. Of course, when in his role as co-host of the USA network's *Prime Time Wrestling*, more is expected of Heenan. We expect him to act like a professional journalist, not a manager with a vendetta against half the WWF. But we're expecting too much. Steve Lombardi's *Prime Time* attack on Terry Taylor and co-host Gorilla Monsoon was obviously planned by the "Weasel." To think otherwise would be flying in the face of reality: Heenan is an evil man at all times. ☐

CORRESPONDENTS

REPORTS

Bristol, TN (Correspondent—Charles Barnette): This match at Viking Hall pitted Andre the Giant in a grudge match against Jake "The Snake" Roberts. As Andre was complaining about Jake's snake, Jake hit him with several blows to the back. Then the Giant gained control with a headlock and backed Roberts into the ropes with a chokehold.

After being headbutted by the Giant, Jake reached for the snake in desperation and released it on Andre. The Giant struggled to get away from the snake and collapsed on the floor. Andre was awarded the decision by disqualification.

In other bouts: Hacksaw Dugan defeated Dino Bravo ... Tully Blanchard & Arn Anderson beat The Rockers ... Brutus Beefcake pinned Ron Bass ... Terry Taylor defeated The Blue Blazer ... Sam Houston beat Danny Davis ... Jim Powers defeated Steve Lombardi ... Scott Casey pinned Conquistador II.

Baltimore, MD (Correspondent—Meng Phong): Receiving another chance at the NWA World title, Sting went after Flair aggressively from the start, and twice put the figure-four leglock on him.



Jake Roberts uses his snake Damien to powerful psychological advantage every time he wrestles Andre the Giant. Andre worries about the snake even when it isn't around. That gives Roberts an edge against a man twice his size.

When Flair recovered, Sting threw him over the top rope and went after him. When the action returned to the ring, Sting charged at Flair. The champion threw referee Tommy Young in Sting's way, however, knocking

Young out of the ring. Young was unable to make the count when Sting executed a small package on Flair and had him pinned. As Young returned to the ring, Flair reversed the maneuver and
(Continued on page 62)

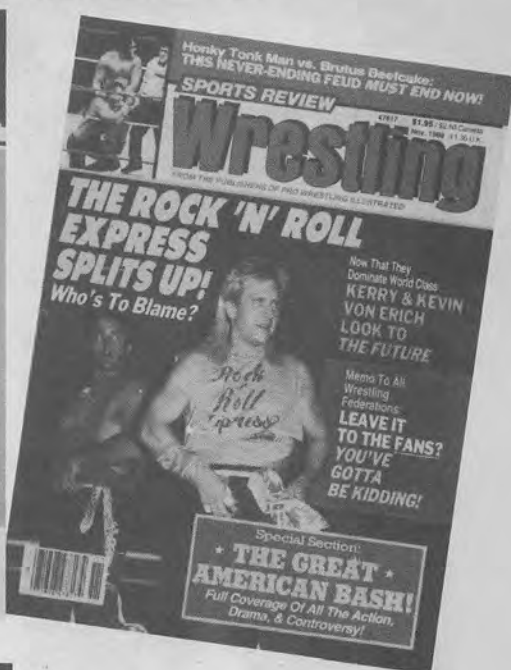
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Q: "My question is for Michael Hayes: Why did you leave World Class and go back to the NWA? World Class just isn't the same without you, Michael!"—Caroline Gill, Dallas

A: "Damn right it ain't the same without me," Hayes said. "I have a style that's all my own, and *nobody* dares copy it. Believe me, World Class ain't finished with Michael 'P.S.' Hayes, but there was some more unfinished business I



Michael Hayes has a punch set for Buddy Roberts. Hayes says he isn't finished with his former partner; he just wants to concentrate on his teaming with Junkyard Dog.

had to take care of here in the NWA, and especially down on Badstreet, in good ol' Atlanta. Me and Junkyard Dog wanna clear out some of the dead wood here, people like Paul Jones and his Russian Assassins. Jones better be on his best behavior, 'cause there ain't nobody badder than the JYD and the man from Badstreet!"

Q: "My question is for Bam Bam Bigelow: It wasn't that long ago you demolished Jerry Lawler, almost scaring him into retirement. Why not come to the AWA and prove to Lawler what a real champion is?"—Mark Halter, Redwood Falls, MN

YOU ASKED US

This is the monthly feature that answers **ALL** your most important questions about the mat sport, the stars, and the feuds. Send us your most perplexing queries and we'll have them answered for you by the world's finest grapplers and most insightful mat reporters. Address your questions to: **YOU ASKED US**, c/o **THE WRESTLER**, P.O. Box 48, Rockville Centre, NY 11571.

A: "I don't have to prove anything to Lawler," Bigelow asserted. "Besides, he isn't worth trying to prove anything to, anyway. Look how he just forfeited his AWA World belt by not showing up for matches. Right now I have more important things in mind, like destroying Barry Windham and taking his U.S. title. Windham, you lucked out at Starrcade, but luck isn't gonna help you the next time we meet. Let's do it with no managers at ringside. I'll tell Oliver [Humperdink] to stay in the locker room and you tell your cronies to keep away. That's one thing I'll give Lawler credit for: He's man enough not to rely on any manager or partner for outside interference."

Q: "My question is for The Brainbusters (Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson): You guys are going nowhere in the WWF. Why stay? In the NWA you were the tag team champions and the centers of attention."—Chris Buhl, Baltimore



Though they'd been World tag team champions in the NWA, Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson joined the WWF because they saw a chance to make more money, says Assistant Editor Bob Smith.

A: Both Blanchard and Anderson were unavailable for comment, so Assistant Editor Bob Smith offered his theory: "The answer, sadly, is money. Tully and Arn saw an opportunity to make a lot more money in the WWF than they could make in the NWA, even though they were champions there. For some guys, titles are nothing more than a vehicle with which they line their pockets. It's unfortunate. I remember a time when all a guy cared about was winning, and winning legally. Financial considerations have always been important, of course, but not as all-consuming as they seem to be today."

Q: "My question is for Sting: Now that Rick Steiner has left The Varsity Club, is there any chance that you, he, and Eddie Gilbert will join forces?"—Chris Salinas, Milwaukee

A: "It's kind of funny, isn't it?" Sting said. "Two years ago, me and Steiner were managed by Gilbert in the UWF. We won the tag team

(Continued on page 63)

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Slant-Eyed Slaughter

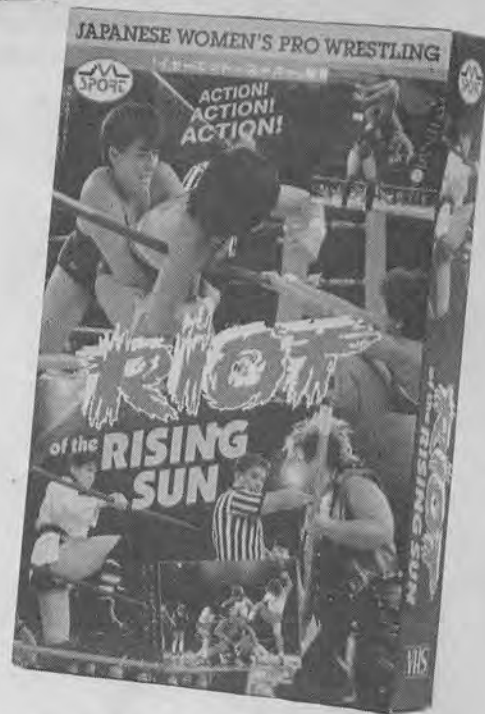
(running time: approximately 70 minutes)

- Wendi Richter & "Devil" Masami vs. Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori & Okumura
- Nancy Kumi vs. Lucy Kayama
- Monster Ripper & "Devil" Masami vs. Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori & Mimi Hagiwara
- "Jaguar" Rimi Yokota vs. Tarantula
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- Yukari Omori & Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori vs. Noriyo Tateno & Itysuki Yamasaki—"The Jumping Bomb Angels"
- Masked You & Kaoru "Dump" Matsumoto vs. Lioness Asuka & Chigusa Nagayo—"The Crush Girls"
- "Jaguar" Rimi Yokota vs. Las Galactia
- "Jaguar" Rimi Yokota vs. "Devil" Masami

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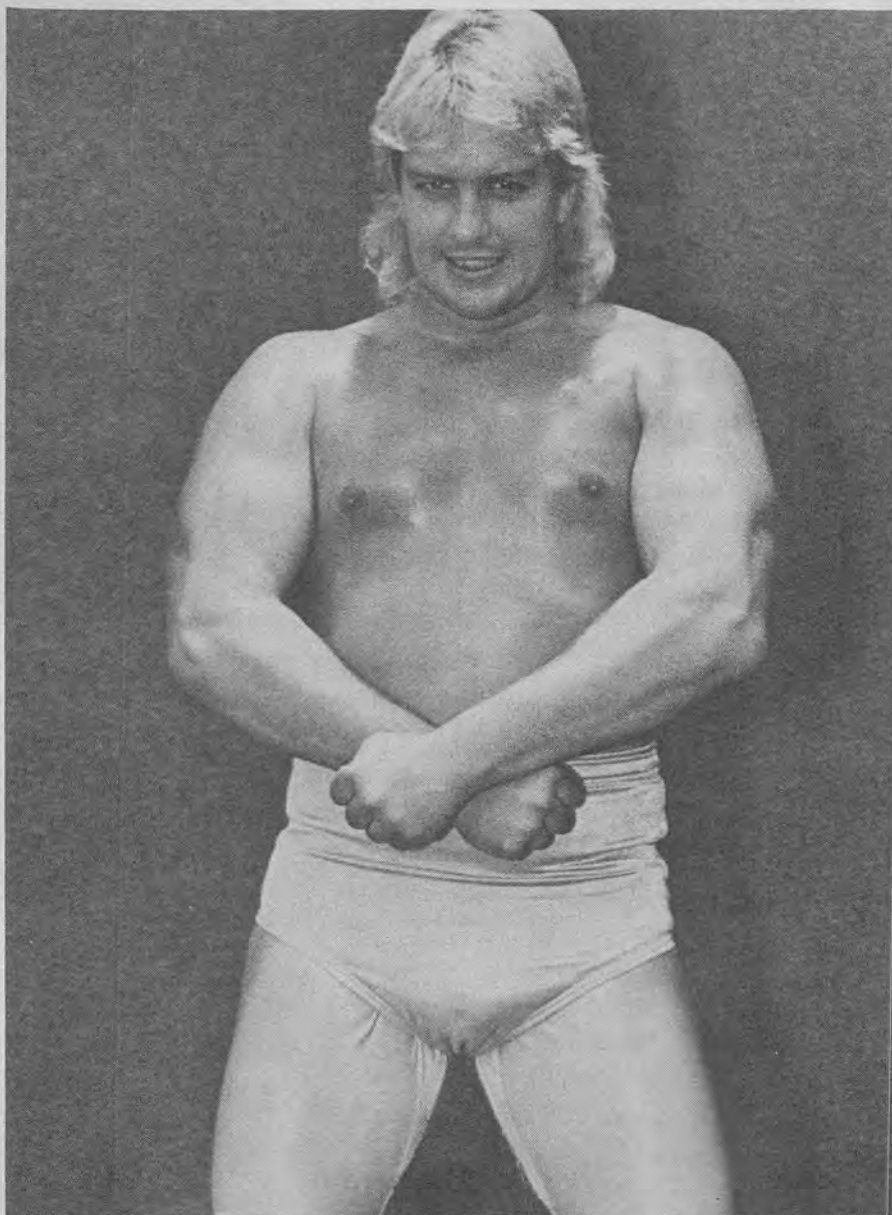


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INTRODUCING

JOHNATHAN HOLLIDAY



Johnathan Holliday has a wealth of amateur experience, having wrestled in competitions in the Soviet Union and Hungary. As a newcomer to the CWF, Holliday has created a lot of commotion as a wrestler and announcer.

"NOBODY CAN TOP my looks, style, and talent. I'm the hottest thing ever to hit wrestling. When you talk about 'The Ultimate Heartthrob,' you're talkin' about every woman's dream and every man's worst fear, daddy!"

That's not Ric Flair, Rick Rude, or Austin Idol talking—it's 25-year-old Johnathan Holliday, who has emerged as the most colorful competitor in the Continental area. Holliday, an outspoken rule-breaker, insists he's going to be the sport's next superstar.

"There isn't another man in wrestling who can do what I can," claims the arrogant Holliday, who has also wrestled in Stampede and the ICW. "I'm already the best color commentator, I'm a great wrestler, and I'm a proven managerial genius. I guess I've been blessed by the gods, eh?"

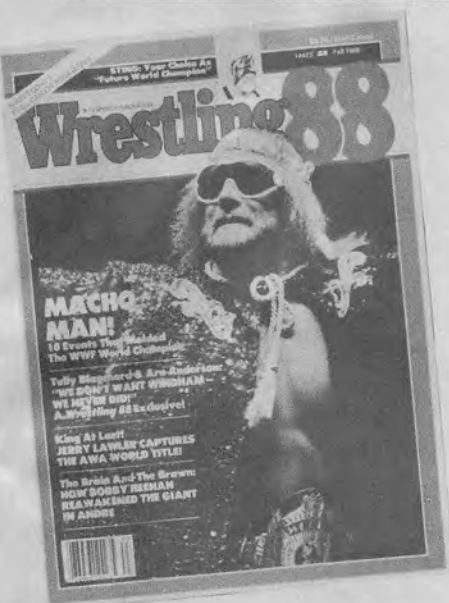
Holliday, who stands 6' tall and weighs 232 pounds, gained his arrogance by forging a solid career as an amateur. A wrestler since the age of five, he earned national recognition by competing in Budapest and the Soviet Union during his pre-teen years. Later, he led New Jersey's Pemberton Township High School wrestling team to the top ranking in the country.

(Continued on page 58)

Only minutes after Johnathan Holliday made his CWF debut, he managed to take over the weekly TV program and start a feud with Austin Idol. This outspoken youngster predicts the Continental title will be his next conquest!

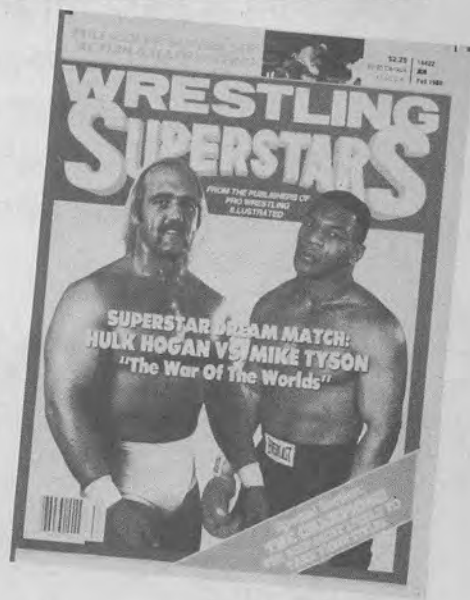
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Q&A

Each month, *The Wrestler* will present a "Question and Answer" forum with an important figure in the wrestling world. It is your chance to meet wrestling's biggest stars as they answer the questions uppermost in the fans' minds



AWA World women's champion Wendi Richter clamps a side headlock on Madusa Miceli, the former champion. Richter defeated Miceli for the title last November.

Q: Wendi, I realize you're busy preparing for tonight's match, so I appreciate you taking this time out to speak with me. You may be the busiest wrestler in the world right now!

A: You're probably right about that, Bob. (laughs) Even during my days

as WWF champion, I've never been quite as active as I am today. I've never been more satisfied, though, so don't take that the wrong way. To win this AWA championship I had to get past Madusa Miceli, who many people were starting to believe was invinci-

ble. In that light, I really consider winning the AWA belt the biggest thing ever to happen to my career.

Q: Really? Even bigger than your two WWF title victories?

A: Absolutely. That's because it came three years after I lost my last world championship to Fabulous Moolah, who tricked me by posing as The Spider Lady when she won the title back. This can be a cruel game, you know. A lot of people assume that if you haven't reached the same plateau you did before, it means you're not as good as you used to be. I think these three titles prove my worth once and for all, don't you?

Q: Certainly. What are your feelings about Madusa Miceli? Your victory over her for the belt was one of the finest matches I saw last year, but since then she's been going around the world putting you down pretty bad.

A: I'll tell you something. Madusa is a coward, a cheater, and a thief. She's got the morals of a common criminal, and she'll do anything at her disposal in order to win a match. But you'll never, ever, hear me say anything bad about her wrestling ability. She's probably the best of the new breed of talented young wrestlers I've seen come into the sport in the last two years.

Q: She's really been on her soapbox lately, though. She claims that the AWA conspired with you to take the title away from her, and she's fueled her argument by the fact



WENDI RICHTER

FOR A FORMER world champion, three years without gaining another major title can seem like an eternity. Just ask Wendi Richter. In fact, many fans were beginning to consider Richter as *pas*se as the "Rock 'n' Wrestling Connection" she helped bring to the sport as two-time WWF World women's champion in 1984 and 1985. Last autumn, she held both the NWF and WWC women's championships—but still she wanted more. Only another world title would ease the longing in her heart.

As determined and outspoken as ever, Richter petitioned AWA officials for title matches against then-World champion Madusa Miceli. Promoters were excited about matching the two biggest superstars in women's wrestling for title bouts, but Miceli didn't want to face Richter's legendary ring skills.

After months of chasing Miceli across the country, Richter won the AWA title on November 26 in Bloomington, Minnesota. It was a victory that cemented her reputation as one of the elite competitors in the history of women's grappling. Assistant Editor Bob Smith spoke with the new champion just hours before she defended her AWA title against Magnificent Mimi in Las Vegas.

that you threw her over the top rope and weren't disqualified by referee Gary DeRusha.

A: Hey, that's just too bad for her. First, she complained about giving me title matches because she thought I wasn't a "worthy contender," whatever *that* means. Then, when I finally *did* get a title bout against her in Nashville, I beat her all over the ring, but Pat Tanaka and Paul Diamond ran in the ring to save her butt. Now, she's crying *again*, but let her complain. When I beat that woman for the title, I beat her fair and square. She just can't take defeat after the kind of year she had.

Q: You've beaten Madusa twice now, too. You also scored the pinfall over her in the mixed six-person tag match at SuperClash III.

A: Looks like I've got that bleached-blonde's number now, doesn't it? From what I understand, she left the country and is now wrestling in Japan. That's pretty frightening, actually. Adding some Oriental maneuvers to her arsenal should make her quite a package to contend with.

Q: How do you rate her against Fabulous Moolah, your most hated opponent during your WWF championship years?

A: Well, Moolah had held the WWF championship for more than 20 years by the time I got my title matches with her, so she was certainly on the down side of her career by that time. That shouldn't



Richter slams Luna. Wendi first achieved prominence when she won the WWF title from Fabulous Moolah in 1984, and championed the women's side of the mat sport along with rock star Cyndi Lauper.

take anything away from the great ability she possessed—and still *possesses*, since she's still wrestling today. Isn't that amazing? Anybody who can stay competitive for as long as she has deserves to be rated as a legend. But to answer your question about the comparison, Madusa's in better physical condition than Moolah ever was. But Madusa will need a lot more experience before she can be mentioned in the same breath as Moolah.

Q: How do you feel about Madusa winning the 1988 Rookie of the Year award, as we announced in the March 1989 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*?

A: Like I said, I don't care for Madusa personally. Women's wrestling, however, needs all of the accolades it can get these days. Madusa's award gives the rest of us credibility, so I think it's fabulous. Of course, the voting was pretty much over by the time I beat her for the AWA title. I have to wonder if she'd have won the award if I had beaten her in July or August. I guess we'll never know.

Q: How much do you know about Magnificent Mimi, whom you're going to face in a couple of hours? You were *teaming* with Mimi only a few weeks ago! Is there a new feud brewing here?

A: I really don't think so. I want to prove that I'm a fighting champion instead of ducking all of the top contenders like Madusa did. Mimi fought for months to get a title shot against Madusa, but Madusa just laughed at her. Well, I've teamed with Mimi, and she's a good wrestler. She was one of the top contenders before I won the belt, so I'm giving her every opportunity to try to beat me.

Q: That's a very commendable attitude, but holding three belts at once means you're going to have three sets of contenders coming at you at once, too. I really don't know how you're going to be able to do it.



Richter executes a Boston crab on Fabulous Moolah who, disguised as the Spider Lady, beat Richter for the WWF belt in 1985. Wendi doesn't like Moolah, but she respects her as a great champion. She doesn't say the same about Miceli.

A: I think I can do it. In fact, all the various opponents I'll get to face will help keep me sharp. I haven't been this excited—or this determined—in a long time. In the AWA, I've got people like Mimi and Candi Devine on my trail. In the NWF, I'm feuding with Olympia, that former bodybuilder. In the WWF, I've got to contend with people like Monster Ripper and Liz Chase. I've really got my

work cut out for me, but this is the kind of work I like.

Q: There are still *other* belts for you to strive for, too. Rockin' Robin holds the WWF belt, while Misty Blue is wearing the NWA title. How do you think you would fare against those two?

A: I think I'd do pretty well. The competition in the WWF has slowed down to a crawl, really. Robin is a good, young talent, but

I think she's a little on the small side to be able to beat me. Sherri Martel is still her top challenger, and she's somebody I'd really love to get my hands on. The same goes for Misty Blue, who has been one of the top competitors in wrestling for about five years now. As you said, there's a lot of things to think about right now.

Q: Is it possible that you might want to strive for title shots against Robin or Misty?

A: *Anything* is possible, but right now I think I'd better keep the home fires burning and concentrate on the three belts I've already got to defend. I'll get around to the others when the time is right.

Q: You've been very outspoken for a long time about the role women's wrestling plays in the overall scheme of the sport. What would you like to see happen in the years ahead?

A: Bob, you know how I feel about the politics involving the female side of the sport. I think there should be at least one women's match on every wrestling card. Like I said before, there are some really great athletes competing right now, and I didn't even get around to mentioning women like Heidi Lee Morgan, Bambi, and Judy Martin. The fans should get a chance to see more of these top stars. Frankly, I don't know why so many wrestling organizations balk at offering women's wrestling. I was really glad to see it make such a strong comeback this past year.

Q: And we're glad to see you with a world championship around your waist again. Thanks for your time, Wendi, and good luck defending your titles in 1989. I must admit that you've really got your work cut out for you.

A: Thank you, Bob, but don't worry about me. When I'm defending a title, I'm the happiest woman in the world. Imagine how I feel now with *three* belts—I'm positively ecstatic!

IT'S IN THE BAG



The Official *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* and *KO Magazine* canvas tote bags are just right for carrying gym equipment and school books. They are also perfect as a lightweight overnight bag for those short business trips or when you sleep over at a friend's house. These large, 10" x 20" 12-ounce bags are made of sturdy cotton canvas with web handles and a self-repairing zipper. Whatever your bag is, these tote bags are made for you.

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SPOT ★LIGHTS...

From time to time, *The Wrestler* will shine its spotlight on an outstanding wrestler, manager, or tag team. These are unforgettable highlights of the sport's greatest stars, compiled by the largest staff of editors and photographers in wrestling journalism

GREG VALENTINE

AFTER 18 YEARS as a pro, Greg "The Hammer" Valentine is still considered a serious contender to any title he goes after, and right now he's going after The Ultimate Warrior's Intercontinental title. Valentine is certain his wrestling ability and craftiness will overcome the Warrior's tremendous strength advantage.

"The Hammer" has held the Intercontinental belt before. On September 24, 1984, in London, Ontario, he defeated Tito Santana—but only after his manager, Capt. Lou Albano, distracted Santana before the match had even started. That allowed Valentine to knee Santana in the legs, causing him to collapse to the mat. Sufficiently weakened, Santana eventually submitted to Valentine's figure-four leglock, a move "The Hammer" now augments with a shinguard on his calf.

Valentine then did something a wrestler rarely does: He switched managers in the midst of a title reign. Disgusted with Albano's attempts to become a fan favorite, Valentine brought Jimmy Hart to the WWF. With Hart, he lost the Intercontinental belt to Santana in a steel cage match in Baltimore on July 6, 1985. Valentine was so enraged he destroyed the belt.

After the loss, Valentine began wrestling more tag matches with his partner, Brutus Beefcake. They called themselves "The Dream Team," and together they were managed by "Luscious" Johnny Valiant. With Valiant's interference, they won the WWF



Greg "The Hammer" Valentine is always accompanied by the megaphone-toting Jimmy Hart, who knows how to bring out the viciousness in the men he manages.

World tag team title on August 24, 1985, in Philadelphia, beating Barry Windham and Mike Rotundo after Valiant rubbed a lit cigar in Windham's face.

It was a revenge of sorts for Valentine; he had suffered major setbacks to both Windham and Rotundo early in his career. In 1982, Valentine lost to Windham in the final of a tournament to decide a new Southern champion. A year later, he lost to Rotundo in the final of a tournament for the Florida title.

The Dream Team held the belts until WrestleMania II, where they lost to The British Bulldogs, managed by Albano, on April 7, 1986. Valentine con-

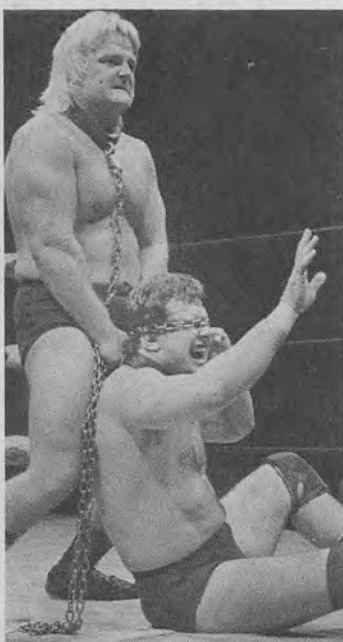
tinued teaming with Beefcake until they had a falling-out during their WrestleMania III match against the Rougeaus. As Valentine feuded with Beefcake, he teamed with Dino Bravo.

In 1988, Valentine continued his feud with Beefcake and also with Don Muraco, who had become a fan favorite. When Muraco left the WWF for Stampede, Valentine claimed he ran him out of the federation. Looking for a new challenge, Valentine teamed with The Honky Tonk Man, another former Intercontinental champion.

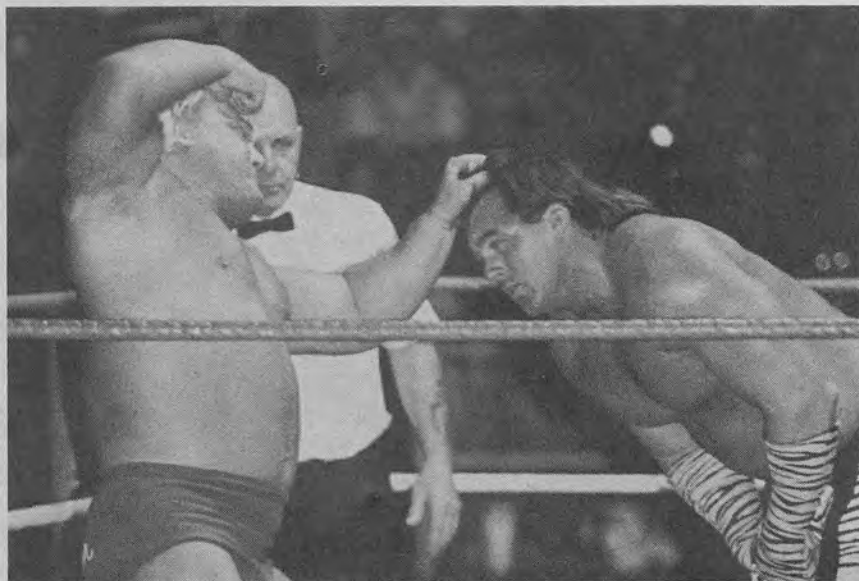
As Valentine's pursuit of The Ultimate Warrior quickens, *The Wrestler* looks back at a career filled with many important victories. □



A bloody Valentine headlocks Victor Rivera (left). "The Hammer" bends Ric Flair's leg on the ringpost during one of their many NWA battles (below).



Valentine chinlocks Mike Rotundo (far left), a frequent opponent when "The Hammer" wrestled in Florida. Roddy Piper is blinded by Valentine in their dog-collar match at Starrcade '83 (left). Valentine pummels Don Muraco (below), one of his most recent opponents.

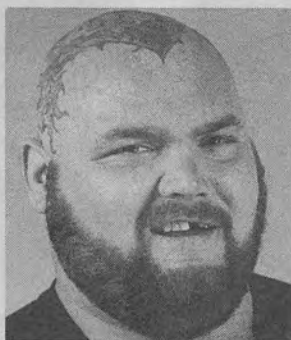


Valentine throws a punch at Brutus Beefcake, his former tag partner. Together, they won the WWF World tag team title in 1985, but split up at WrestleMania III. As Beefcake became popular with the fans, Valentine continued to earn their wrath.



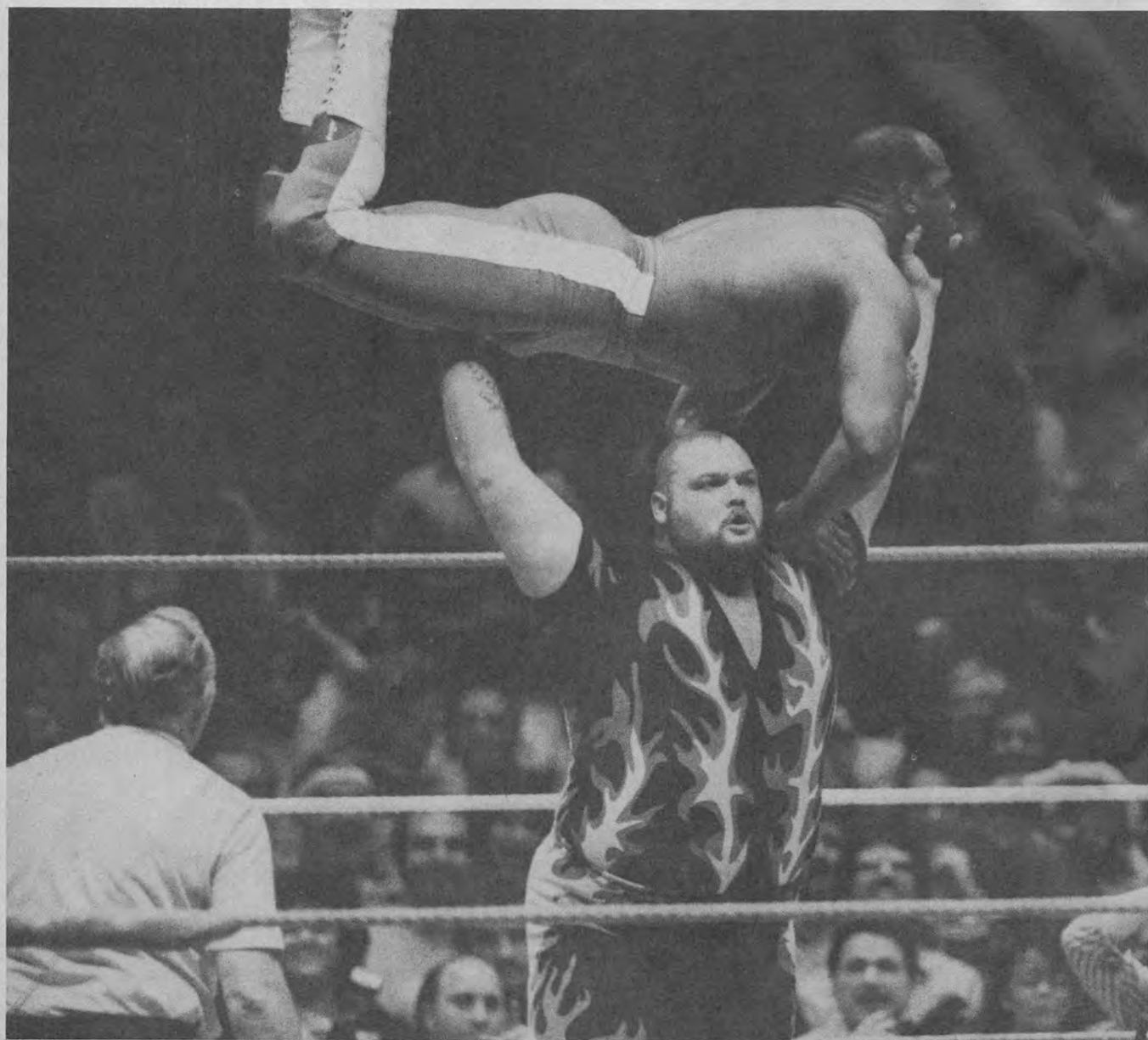
RAY

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES



**BAM BAM
BIGELOW**

Each month
THE WRESTLER'S panel of experts
will offer their candid opinions of one
of wrestling's stars. Whether an up-and-coming
youngster or an established superstar in his own right,
our panel will always be frank and honest without fear of reprisal



Bam Bam Bigelow presses Ted DiBiase's bodyguard Virgil over his head. Despite his enormous size—almost 400 pounds—Bigelow uses maneuvers that require a great deal of agility and quickness. Currently wrestling in the NWA, Bigelow also wrestles in Japan from time to time.



CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"About four years ago, my ol' buddy Larry Sharpe told me he was training a kid who used to be a bounty hunter. Big deal, I said. Then he told me the kid weighed 390 pounds and could dropkick. I told Larry that he should lay off the sauce, but he wasn't lyin'. Bigelow is even *better* than he described him. As far as I'm concerned, the Bammer is already one of the best in the business. He's my kind of guy all the way, daddy."

Capt. Lou Albano, long known as "The Guiding Light," has guided 13 tag teams to an unmatched 16 WWF World tag team titles.



LARRY HENNIG

"I know that he caters to the fans these days, but I think that Bigelow is a tremendous talent. He kind of reminds me of myself back in my early years. When I started wrestling, I weighed 280 pounds. Back then, not many guys were that big, so I used my bulk to my advantage. Bigelow does the same thing—except he's about 100 pounds heavier! He's also been blessed with tremendous speed and agility, so I can't see how anybody will ever beat him. I like the big lug!"

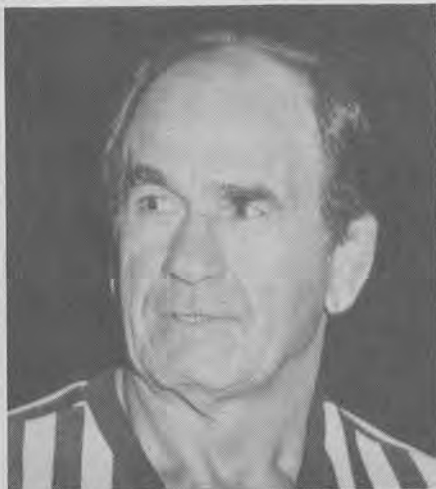
Larry "The Ax" Hennig is a four-time former AWA World tag team champion; he held three of those titles with Harley Race.



KILLER KOWALSKI

"Bigelow was one of the hottest rookies I ever saw back in '86, but if you ask me, his career has regressed since then. A guy as big and tough as he is should be concerned with smashing opponents into the canvas, not worrying about the idiots in the stands. And what happened to Oliver Humperdink? He was legendary for having the most devious mind in the business, but now he spends his time at ring-side leading cheers! It makes no sense at all to me."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rulebreakers in the sport's history, runs a wrestling school in Reading, Massachusetts.



LOU THESZ

"What a change from the big men of my era. Men like Moose Cholak and George 'Two Ton' Harris were huge, but they were also very slow. Bigelow is even bigger than they were, but he moves as well as any 220-pounder. He can choose from a big splash, an over-the-top-ropes vault, or a powerslam as his finisher—and that's only picking a few of the maneuvers he uses regularly! He's made the most of his potential, which makes him a real credit to our sport."

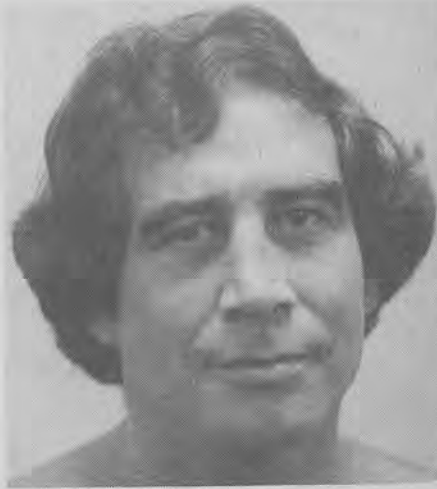
Lou Thesz held the NWA World title six times during his fabulous 50-year career. Many consider him the greatest all-round wrestler in history.



PROF. TORU TANAKA

"Bigelow's supposed rise to prominence only shows how far his manager, Oliver Humperdink, has fallen. Humperdink used to manage fine Japanese talent like White Ninja, Mr. Pogo, and Kendo Nagasaki. Now he is devoting all his time to Bigelow, a product of starchy foods and decadent American lifestyle. I once thought that Humperdink had more sense than that. Bigelow has yet to win any important titles because he thinks he is much better than he really is."

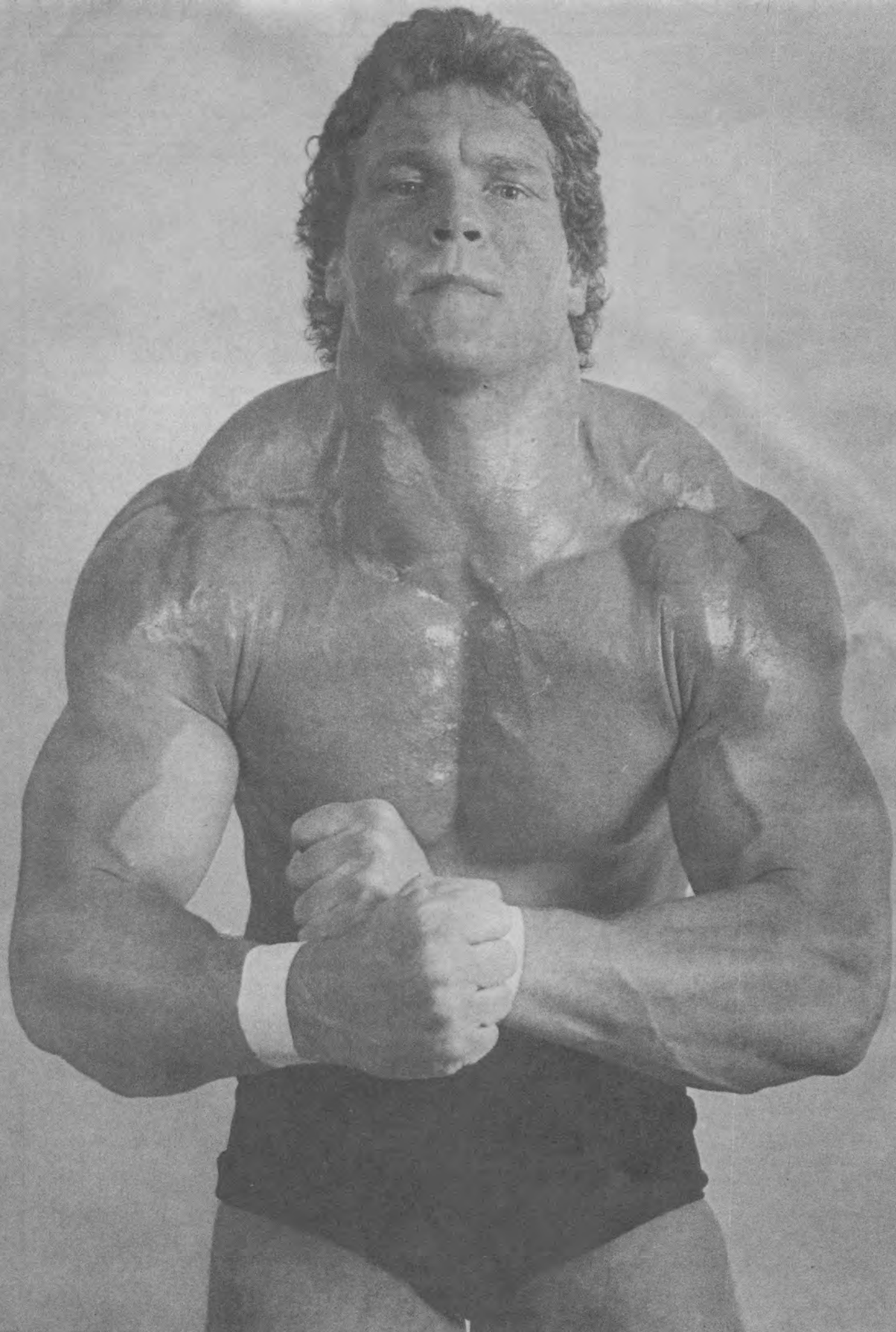
Prof. Tanaka, a three-time co-holder of the WWF World tag team title with Mr. Fuji, is currently a successful actor.



JACK BRISCO

"I'm on the Bigelow bandwagon, too, but I have to question his motivations. Why did he change his name to Crusher Yurkof when he wrestled in World Class a couple of years ago? Why did he leave the WWF after spending less than a year there? Now that he's in the NWA, will he stick around? Bigelow reminds me of boxer Mike Tyson. They both have more talent than anyone else in their sports, but they both have to settle down and get their minds on business."

Jack Brisco is a two-time former NWA World champion, and a three-time former NWA World tag team champion with brother Jerry.



Future Champion Or Hollow Potential?

WHAT SID VICIOUS MUST KNOW TO REACH THE TOP

SID VICIOUS HAS it all. He's young, talented, and carries 290 pounds of muscle on his massive 6'7" frame. He possesses a dropkick that men half his size would be proud of, and the kind of killer instinct that makes Big Bossman look like a Good Samaritan. Shortly after arriving in the CWA, Vicious broke the neck of Bill Dundee's 17-year-old son, Jamie.

But Vicious' future holds bigger challenges than a 17-year-old boy. Kerry Von Erich called Vicious the most awesome man he's ever wrestled—and that includes men like Ric Flair and Jerry Lawler. Several managers are already begging Vicious for the privilege of guiding his career. It's enough to make the editors of *The Wrestler* say—do we dare?—that Vicious is the next Hulk Hogan.

Of course, Vicious isn't the first youngster labeled a future superstar or

World champion. It's a label that has been put on, among others, Scott Hall, Danny Spivey, Lex Luger, Bam Bam Bigelow, and Sting. Some have failed in their quest to reach the heights of superstardom while others have succeeded. They're all still trying to reach the lofty heights of a singles world championship.

Hall, Spivey, Luger, Bigelow, and Sting know what Vicious is going through—and what he's about to go through. They know what it's like to be a youngster in the spotlight; they've all experienced the inevitable pratfalls found on the road to greatness.

These five men can teach Sid Vicious a valuable lesson. They know what he must do to reach the top.

"I GUESS YOU can say it took me a while to get it going, but here I am," Danny Spivey said when reached by

phone in Tokyo.

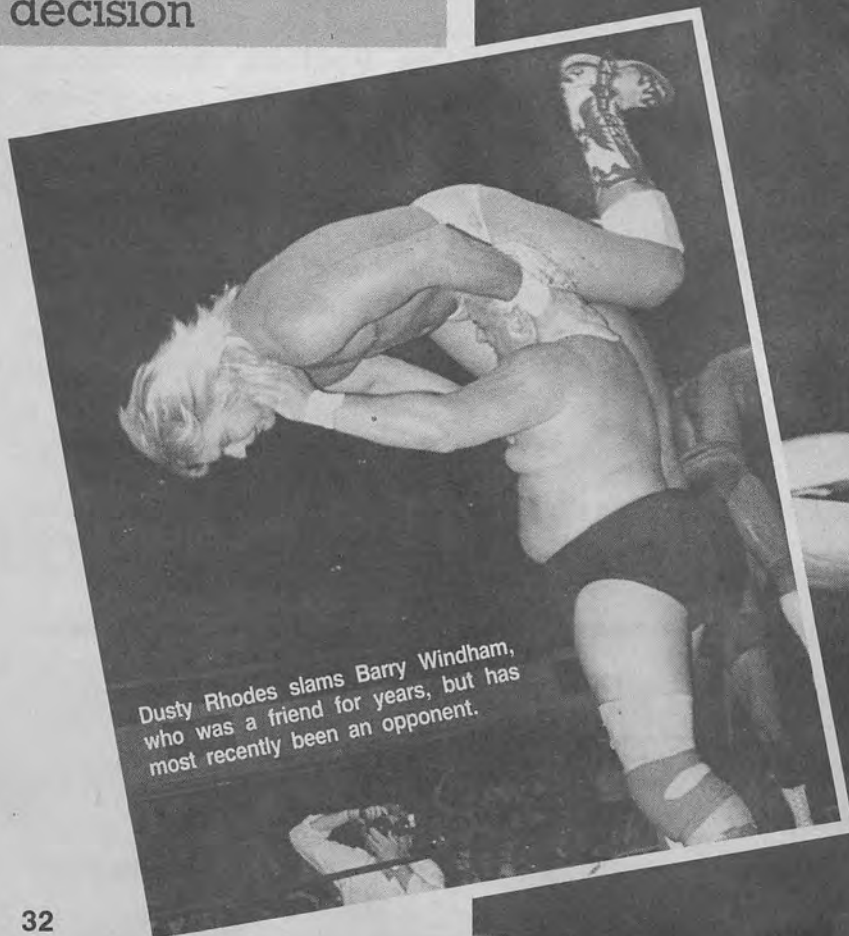
Five years ago, Spivey, a tall, handsome, muscular man, formed a tag team called The American Starship with Scott Hall, another tall, handsome, muscular youngster. Hall later teamed with Curt Hennig to win the AWA World tag championship in 1986, but has since failed to match that success; Spivey failed to make any impact at all in the U.S., but is now becoming a major star in Japan. He learned the hard way that success isn't simply handed out in a sport as competitive as pro wrestling.

"It's tough," Spivey said, "because there's so much competition. When you're young and the press likes you, there's this tendency to start believing all the hype. That's what happened to me, and it can happen to anyone. I haven't seen Vicious wrestle, but I've
(Continued on page 50)

*Sid Vicious isn't the first young star to be labeled a future world champion or "the next Hulk Hogan." In this *Wrestler* exclusive, five men who also were once similarly labeled examine the challenges that lie ahead for the powerful young Vicious*

WHY DUSTY RHODES

Dusty Rhodes made headlines again this past January, but not for winning a title or ending a feud. The announcement that the "American Dream" is leaving the NWA sent shock waves through the sport. In this dramatic special feature, Dusty explains the reasons behind his decision



Dusty Rhodes slams Barry Windham, who was a friend for years, but has most recently been an opponent.

LEFT THE NWA

By Bill Apter

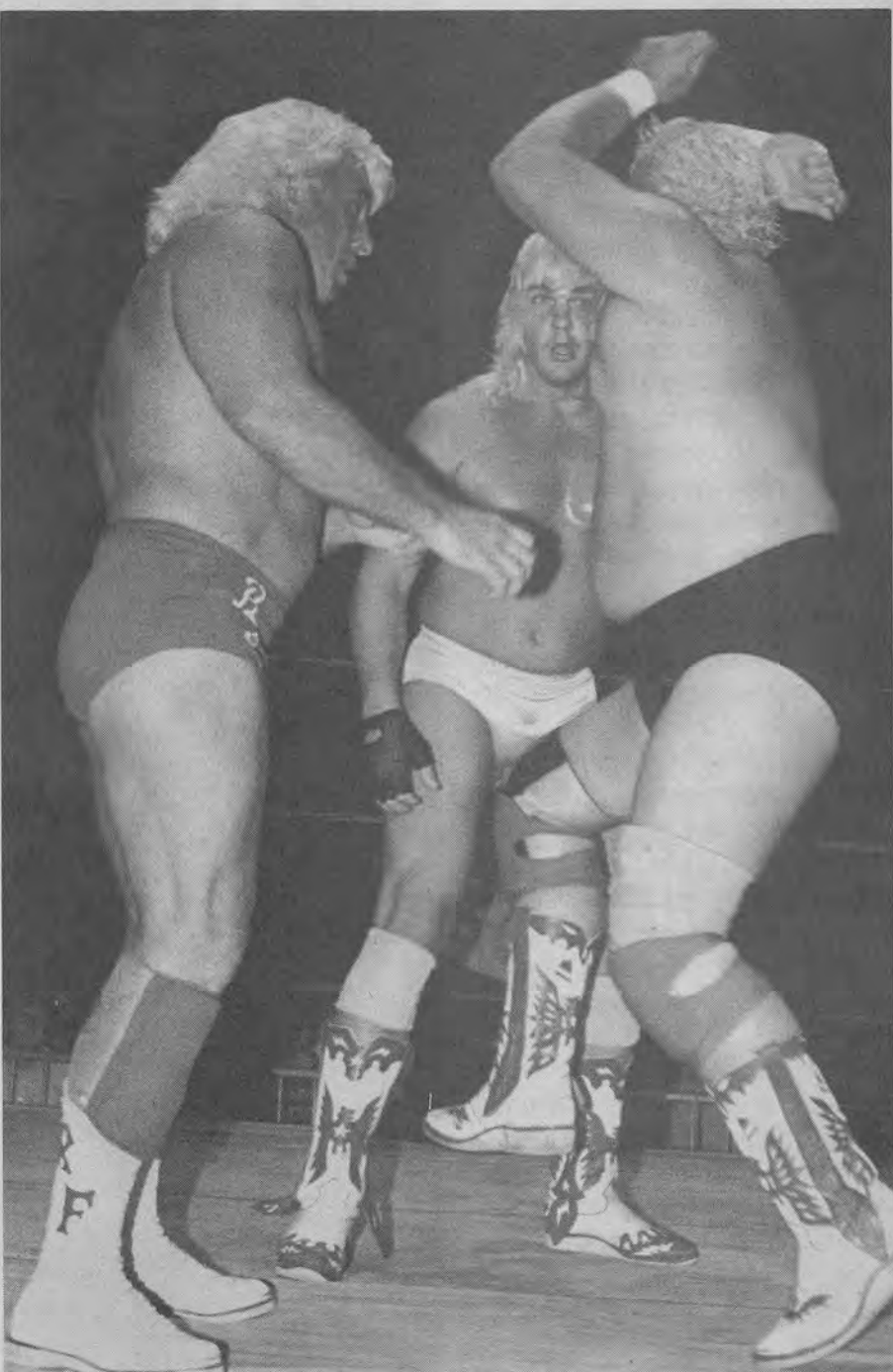
THE WORDS WERE as shocking as any that have been spoken in a wrestler's dressing room. Threats, announcements of changed alliances, and unexpected revelations about other wrestlers are nothing compared to the bombshell Dusty Rhodes dropped on a group of reporters this past January.

"I'm leavin' the NWA," Rhodes said. Several reporters dropped their pens while the always dramatic Dusty paused for effect. A few others rushed to nearby pay phones to call their editors. "But I want everyone to know that I'm not retirin'," he continued. "I'm just goin' off to greener pastures, and I don't mean money, I mean life."

There seemed to be little emotion in his voice, surprising since Rhodes has spent the better part of his 23 pro years in the National Wrestling Alliance. Even when he was based primarily in Florida, the "American Dream" was one of the most visible figures in the entire NWA. It would be fair to say that for most of the 1970s and the early '80s, Rhodes was the best-known wrestler in the United States.

And he knew it. Never one of the more humble individuals in the sport, Rhodes has recently taken to telling the fans and anyone listening, "I *am* rasslin'! I *am* the NWA!" Things have changed in the NWA, however, and they've changed for Dusty Rhodes, too. Now, after all this time, the three-time World champion is ready to go back to where it all began: Florida.

"I've done it all in the NWA, and there's nothin' left for me to accomplish," Rhodes said. "I've been World champion, U.S. champion, TV champion, tag team champion,



Rhodes unloads his "bionic elbow" on both Windham and Ric Flair. Rhodes has warred with Flair for years. Many of their classic matches took place in Florida, which Rhodes is now making his home base. He invites Flair to come down and meet him anytime.

everythin' that you can do, the 'Dream' has done. Everybody's come after me, and nobody's been able to get me. Now if they want me, they can come after me in Florida."

Rhodes admits he has been frustrated in his attempt to regain the U.S. title from former friend and teammate Barry Windham. The younger Windham has constantly

(Continued on page 54)

IT WAS SIMPLY a case of “easy come, easy go” for Rick Steamboat in 1987. On March 29 at WrestleMania III, Steamboat defeated Randy Savage to win the Intercontinental title he had fought so long for. But only two months and four days later, Steamboat lost the belt to The Honky Tonk Man, an inferior competitor in every way.

The loss was shocking. As a challenger to Savage’s title, Steamboat had wrestled some of the finest matches of his career. Savage, a brutal competitor with outstanding scientific and aerial skills—along with the desire to kill any man who crossed his or Elizabeth’s path—posed the ultimate test for Steamboat, one of the finest all-around wrestlers the sport has ever seen.

Their matches were classics. Steamboat was injured several times, but always managed to fight back. When he upended Savage at WrestleMania III, it was the most important victory of “The Dragon’s” career.

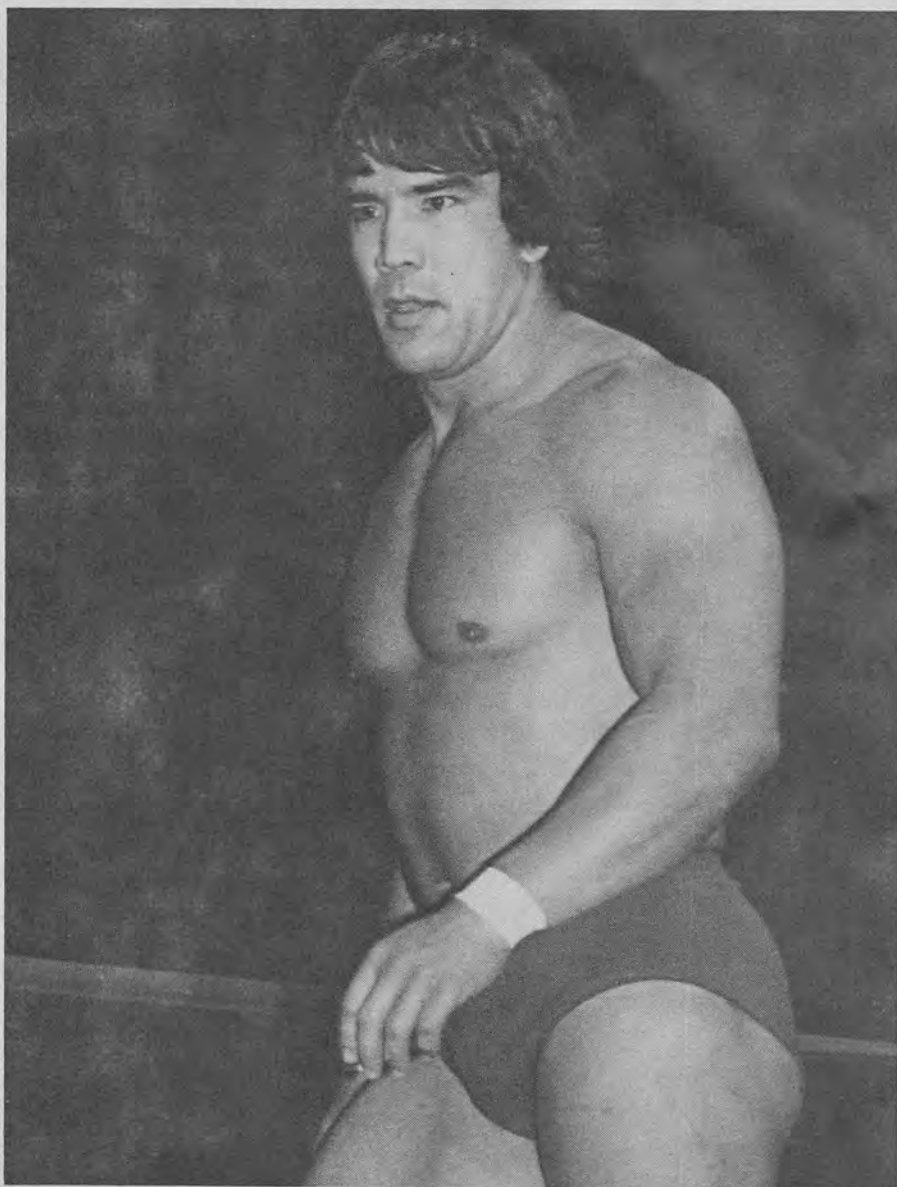
So how could he have lost the belt so quickly to a wrestler like Honky Tonk, who has few scientific skills, no aerial ability, and is not nearly as strong as Steamboat?

Some might say Honky Tonk cheated, and there *is* evidence that he used the ropes to pin Steamboat. Harsher critics would say Steamboat choked under championship pressure.

But the more realistic view is that there’s a difference between wrestling as a champion and wrestling as a challenger. A change in style is necessary: A challenger is always on the attack, while a champion is always on the defensive. A champion can afford to get himself disqualified, but he can’t afford to get pinned. A challenger loses his title shot if he gets himself disqualified; he

RICK

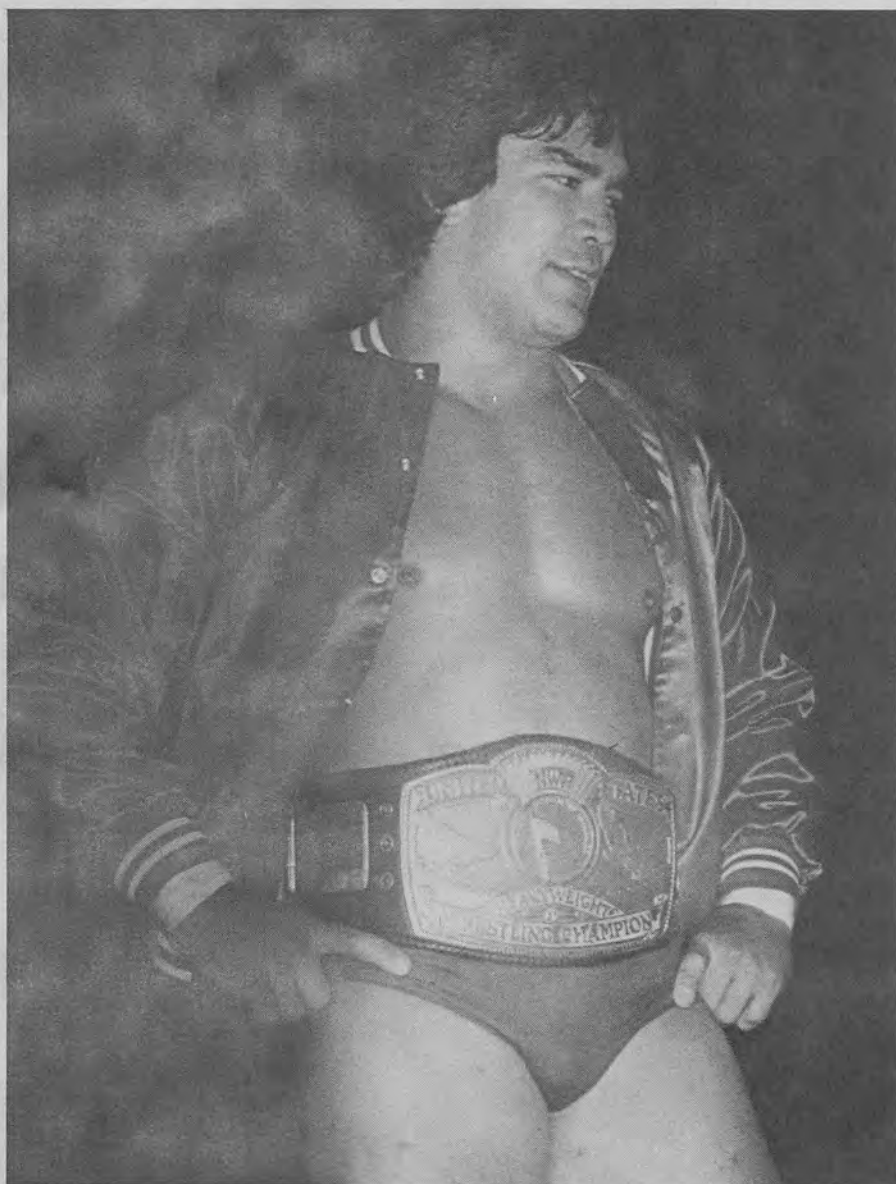
CHALLENGER-



WHO'S

STEAMBOAT

-CHAMPION



BETTER?

The man is the same, the skills are the same—but does Rick Steamboat wrestle better when he's going after a title or when he's already reached the top? The question makes for fascinating debate, and the answer will shock you!

loses nothing tangible, however, if he loses the match.

The historical evidence shows that Steamboat wrestles better as a challenger than he does as a champion. It would follow that Rick Steamboat: Challenger would beat Rick Steamboat: Champion every time. Here's the proof.

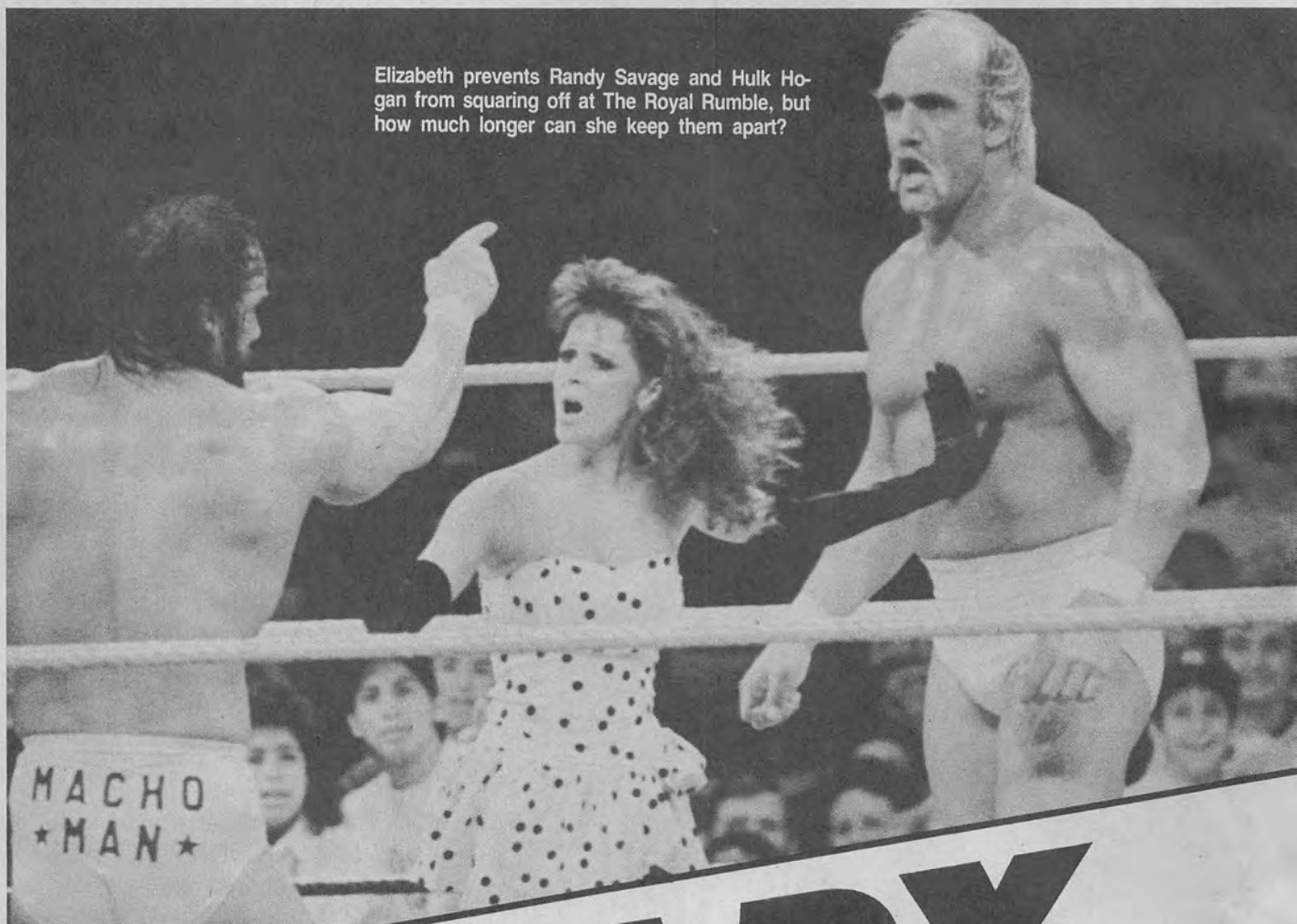
The Steamboat trophy case is full of honors. The list of titles he has won during his glorious 13-year career is long and distinguished. But a pattern runs through Steamboat's career, tarnishing what would be an otherwise outstanding record: a pattern of short championship reigns.

In the early 1980s, Steamboat was one of the top young singles stars in the Mid-Atlantic area. A brief Mid-Atlantic title reign ended on April 16, 1981, with a loss to Ivan Koloff. Six months later, Steamboat regained the title, only to lose it in another 22 days to Roddy Piper.

(Continued on page 56)

RANDY SAVAGE AND HULK HOGAN-

Elizabeth prevents Randy Savage and Hulk Hogan from squaring off at The Royal Rumble, but how much longer can she keep them apart?



READY TO RUMBLE!

By Bill Apter

THE UNIQUE NATURE of The Royal Rumble makes fascinating matches within the match inevitable. In fact, right at the outset of the WWF's January 15 event at The Summit in Houston, Demolition partners Ax and Smash went head-to-head for more than two minutes.

It was a dream matchup, but who could've guessed that the

To elaborate: Hogan entered the ring 32 minutes into the match and proceeded on a course of destruction that would eventually knock nine wrestlers out of competition. Incredibly—and some might say mistakenly—Savage was one of those nine. With 38:43 expired, a Hogan clothesline nailed Bad News Brown and Savage, eliminating

“Macho Man.” Hogan and Savage shook hands, but nobody was fooled by this brief truce.

The confrontation, though brief, showed that Savage will not hesitate to go after Hogan under the proper circumstances. And it happened only a short time after Hogan and Savage nearly came to blows under somewhat different conditions in another event seen

The shocking confrontation between WWF World champion Randy Savage and Hulk Hogan at The Royal Rumble set the stage for an intense feud between the Megapowers. Now there can be no doubt: Each man is out for the other's blood!

best was yet to come?

Nearly 37 minutes later, the main question asked prior to the Rumble—what will happen if Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage square off?—was answered. A few more seconds made it obvious that the Rumble wouldn't be the last time the Megapowers found themselves on opposite sides of the ring.

both men.

A shocked Savage then stormed back into the ring to confront Hogan, the only wrestler remaining (the next wrestler—Big Bossman—wasn't due in the ring for another 70 seconds). The two friends shouted at each other and it looked like they'd come to blows—until Elizabeth scurried into the ring and calmed down the

by a nationwide television audience.

On the January 7 broadcast of *Saturday Night's Main Event*, Hogan wrestled Akeem in the featured singles match. Hogan came to the ring with Elizabeth while Akeem was joined by Slick and Big Bossman. When Akeem and Bossman ganged up on Hogan midway through the match, Elizabeth ran to the dressing room for help.

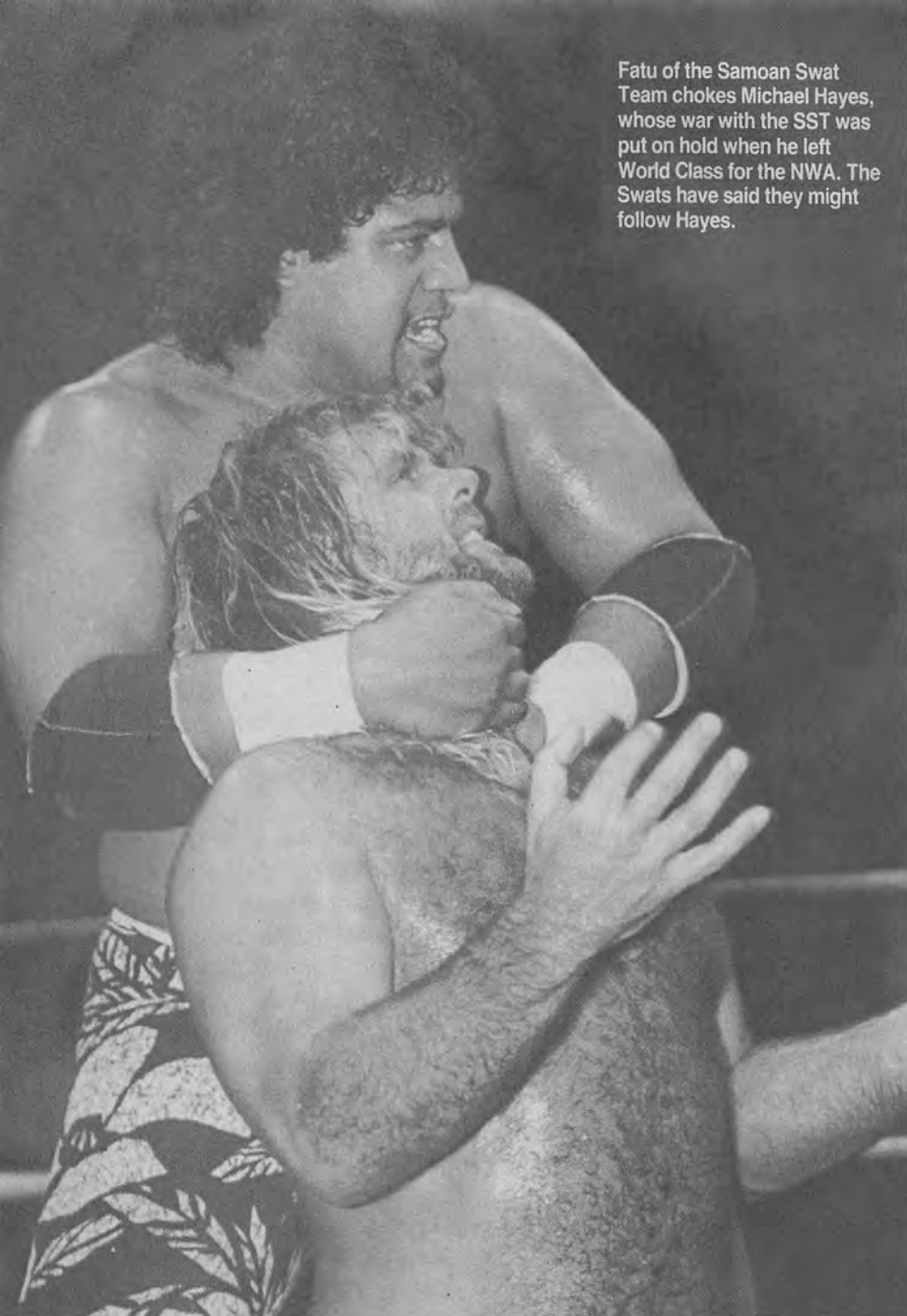
She came back emptyhanded, only to be grabbed by Bossman, who handcuffed her wrists together. Finally, Savage ran out with a chair and rescued his manager. Elizabeth then went to console Hogan, but a visibly angered Savage pulled her away. Savage and Hogan didn't go through their customary posing, nor did they shake hands.

Afterward, Hogan and Savage both claimed there were no problems with the Megapowers and they were as strong as ever. The “Hulkster” and the “Macho Man” then shook hands while Elizabeth looked on, smiling assuredly for all the world to see.

That's why the events of The Royal Rumble came as such a
(Continued on page 60)



The “Hulkster” attacks Bad News Brown at the Rumble as Savage is slumped on the turnbuckle; Hogan eliminated both men with the same move. Some people contend Hogan knocked Savage out on purpose, but others insist it was a mistake.



Fatu of the Samoan Swat Team chokes Michael Hayes, whose war with the SST was put on hold when he left World Class for the NWA. The Swats have said they might follow Hayes.

SWAT Team Hunts Down Hayes:

Photos by Buddy Myers

By Andy Rodriguez

BUDDY ROBERTS HAD never been happier. He had just arrived at The Sportatorium in Dallas to discover that Michael Hayes, his former partner in the legendary team known as The Fabulous Freebirds, had left World Class for the NWA. Roberts immediately decided it was time for an impromptu press conference.

"That's right, folks," barked the manic Roberts to a huddle of reporters that formed around him in the locker room. "That coward Hayes and his no-talent partner,

Steve Cox, were destroyed at the hands of my men, Samu and Fatu, the incredible Samoan Swat Team. This is the first step toward immortality for the SST and myself. What a great day this is!"

About an hour later, Fatu and Samu strolled into the locker room, where they were met by their ecstatic manager. "No more Hayes, boys," bellowed Roberts. "We ran him out of Texas for good. We're all alone on top of World Class now."

Instead of joining the celebra-

tion, Samu just looked at Fatu, who stared forlornly at the ground.

"I thought we were supposed to cripple Hayes," complained a disgusted Fatu. "It was our job to beat on him, and I really enjoyed doing it."

"Yeah," echoed a perturbed Samu. "I don't *want* to be finished with him yet. I want to be the man who puts Hayes out of wrestling for the rest of his worthless life. Where is he, Buddy? Let's go and destroy him forever!"

Roberts has created a monster. Even though Hayes has left World Class, Fatu and Samu aren't satisfied. These Samoan giants are willing to travel to the ends of the earth to wrestle Hayes, and this is one time Hayes must not stand alone. He needs to go back to Badstreet U.S.A., back to the one

IT'S TIME FOR THE FREEBIRDS TO REUNITE!

Michael Hayes has left World Class, but the vicious Samoan Swat Team insists they're not finished with the former Freebird. This is one battle Hayes cannot fight alone. It's time for Hayes to swallow his pride and team again with his former Freebird mate, Terry Gordy!

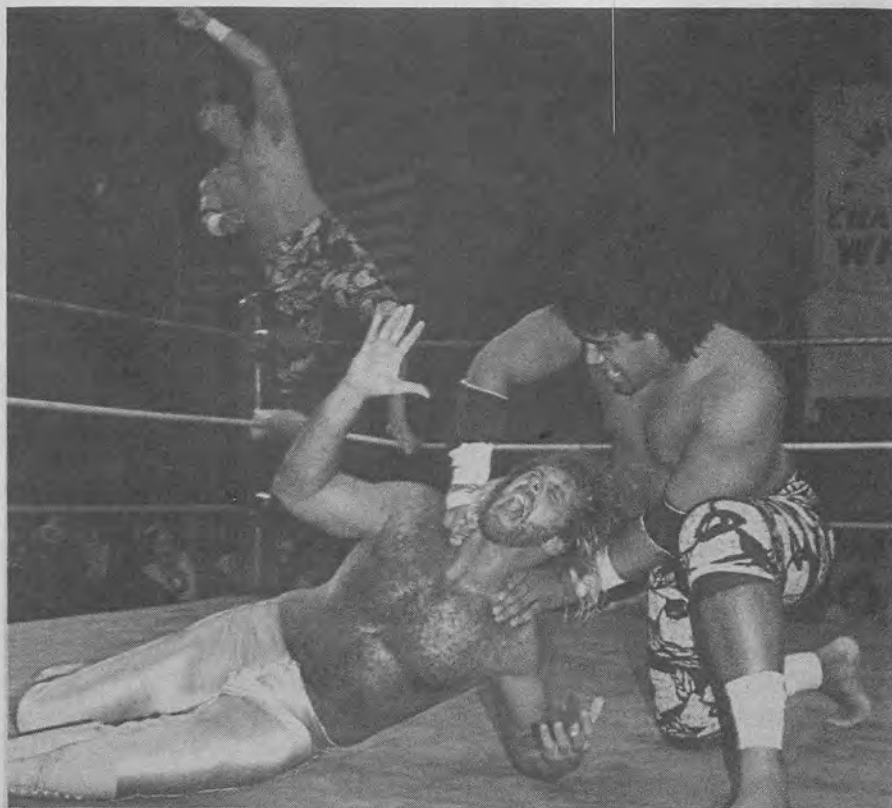
man in wrestling who is equal to this kind of task.

Hayes needs Terry Gordy again. It's time for the Freebirds to reunite!

Hayes shocked World Class fans by deciding to return to the NWA in January. He immediately began an impressive winning streak, but word quickly spread that the SST still considered him unfinished business.

"Those Samoans just never know when to give up, do they?" laughed Hayes when informed of the Samoans' intentions. "When Steve and I decided to split up our team, I figured it was time to come back to the NWA, 'cause things are lookin' pretty hot here. But if those Samoans want another piece o' me, then I'm gonna have to consider gettin' me some help—some *serious* help."

Could Hayes be considering Gordy? The 289-pound former



Fatu has control of Hayes on the mat while his partner, Samu, signals to the crowd. Buddy Roberts, the Samoans' manager and Hayes' old Freebird partner, isn't worried about Hayes anymore, despite the possibility Hayes may team with Terry Gordy.



Hayes backflips Fatu. If Roberts tries to stop the Samoans (who are World Class tag team champions) from leaving Texas to go after Hayes, they may defy their manager and go anyway because their hatred for Hayes is so strong.

Freebird has been busy wrestling in Japan and in several independent federations. Whatever animosity that once existed between Hayes and Gordy is a thing of the past—at least according to Gordy, it is.

"Michael will *always* be my Freebird buddy," said Gordy following a recent match in the Southern Championship area. "We had a little bit of trouble in Texas this past summer, but Michael showed me he's still a man I can trust. It would be kinda fun to wrestle with

him, particularly against that sawed-off runt Roberts."

Hayes admits the idea of teaming with "Bamm Bamm" is an interesting thought. "I haven't seen Terry in months," said Hayes. "I don't know how he feels about me these days. But I *do* know that there isn't another team in wrestling that can beat us. We're *still* the best, baby."

"Gordy and Hayes together?" asked Roberts, still bitter about the Freebird breakup eight months after

it occurred. "The last time we were all in the same ring is when that turncoat Terry decided to abandon me after I helped him win a Triple Dome of Terror match last May. The stinkin' ingrate. If that big goon wants to stick his nose in my business again, I'll be more than happy to rip it right off his ugly mush."

Thus far, however, any talk of a reunion remains just that. Gordy continues to hold the All-Japan International tag team title with Stan Hansen, and remains one of the biggest superstars in the Orient. It would take quite a lot to persuade Gordy to leave his current success, but teaming with Hayes to battle the SST might be enough of an attraction.

Another possible scenario is that the SST might break away from Roberts in order to seek out Hayes. Already, Fatu and Samu have defied one of Roberts' orders. The duo wrestled the monstrous team of Kamala and The Beast recently at The Sportatorium, a match Roberts had explicitly ordered them not to participate in. Roberts has made no plans to leave the World Class area. If the SST were to leave, it might be on their own.

In any event, a resumption of the Hayes-SST war is something all of these men—except Roberts—would seem to relish.

"I want Hayes," said Samu. "I want him so bad I can taste it. I won't rest until I put him out of wrestling forever."

"If those fools are dumb enough to come here to take me on, I say come on down!" yelled Hayes.

"If Mike calls, I'll be there," insisted Gordy.

This is one scenario everyone—including the fans—would like to see. If the SST insists on making life hard on Hayes, then "P.S." must answer back with Gordy, one of the few men in the sport tough enough to meet the Samoans head on.

It's the *only* solution. □



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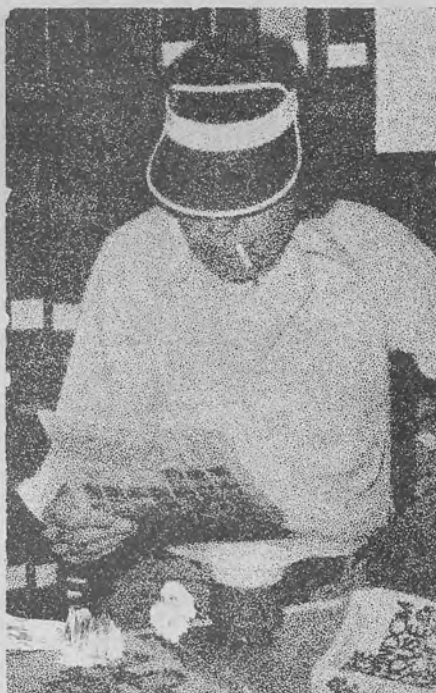
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MATT BROCK'S



LOOKING BACK

APRIL 30, 1973 CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW vs. FRED BLASSIE

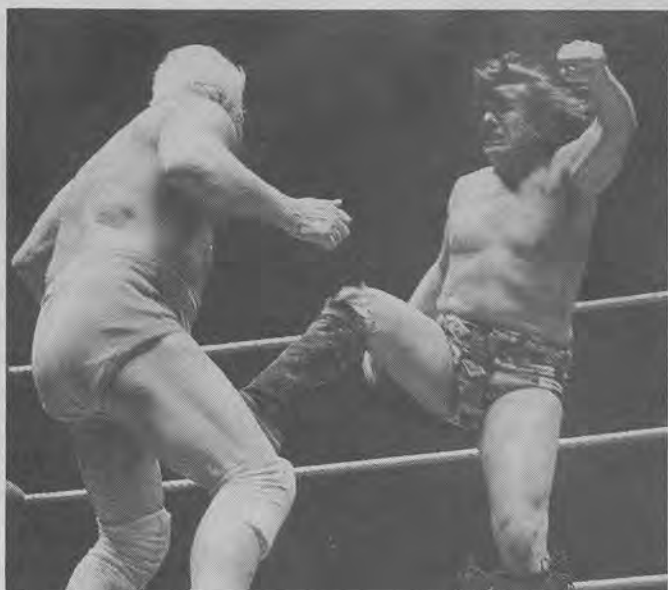
I DON'T SEE much of Freddie Blassie anymore, but I see Chief Jay Strongbow all the time. You do too if you attend WWF cards. He can often be seen walking some of the wrestlers down the runway before matches, and I've seen him back near the dressing rooms several times. He's a talent agent for the WWF now, and he's at all the big shows.

Of course, the Chief looks different now. He's put on a little weight around the middle (haven't we all?) since his retirement, so he's a bit bigger than he used to be. But looking at him, you can still see why he was one of the best wrestlers of his day. Strongbow always had this intense desire in his eyes, and he always gave a total effort.

Blassie's also working for the WWF these days, but I haven't seen him at all. I often wonder, though, how Blassie and Strongbow get along. Maybe they're never together at the arenas because the WWF powers are afraid of another war breaking out. Well, if it did, it would be a heck of a lot better than this awful Honky Tonk Man vs.



Chief Jay Strongbow elbows Fred Blassie off the ropes. Matt Brock recalls that these two men despised each other in the heyday of their feud 15 years ago.



Blassie corkscrews Strongbow into a neckbreaker (left). Strongbow kicks Blassie in the midsection (above). The Indian chief was a very popular wrestler in his prime.

Ultimate Warrior feud we've been watching since last summer.

Let me tell you something, Blassie and Strongbow graced Madison Square Garden with some wrestling classics. One match in particular might not go down as one of the greatest technically I've ever seen in the building, but it certainly was among the most memorable. I'm talking about a match back in April '73 when Strongbow, in the words of the *Inside Wrestling* headline writers of the day, made Blassie "chicken out."

Blassie, of course, denied it from the start, as did his manager, Capt. Lou Albano (a fact people often forget: Albano, perhaps the greatest manager ever, managed Blassie, one of the greatest managers ever, for a short time). According to Albano, he signaled Blassie to leave the ring because Strongbow was wrestling dirty. Don't believe it.

As I remember it, there were about 22,000 fans in the Garden that night. The place was absolutely packed, and Strongbow-Blassie was the main reason. There was hatred between these two guys like you wouldn't believe. Blassie called Strongbow "The Indian," and he didn't mean it as a compliment. Both men were right up there in the ratings—Pedro Morales was champion at the time—but they were more concerned with each other than

with the title.

Managers were banned from ring-side in New York back then (not a bad idea to revive today), so Albano came to the ring with Blassie and then went to stand in the runway. Well, the bell rang, and Strongbow took over. It was complete annihilation. Blassie had the upper hand for a few seconds, but that was it. Strongbow delivered a series of kicks, punches, and whips into the ropes that made you wonder if he was about to cripple Blassie for good.

But he never got the chance. About 10 minutes into the match, Blassie ran back to the dressing room and never came back. Albano claimed that Strongbow attacked Blassie before the bell and was wrestling dirty. He even went so far as to claim that Blassie had the upper hand. I seem to remember Albano saying something about an aerial attack, although you could count on one hand the number of aerial maneuvers Blassie used in his entire career.

Strongbow, of course, properly claimed it was a lot of malarky, and also said the match was signed as a Texas death match. Well, that's something I don't remember. Maybe Strongbow misunderstood the rules of the match, because from my understanding, it was just an ordinary one-on-one match with no special rules. But that's beside the point. The fact is,



Strongbow prepares to whip Blassie across the ring. At the time of this bout, Blassie, who would go on to be a great manager, was himself managed by Capt. Lou Albano.

Blassie ran back to the dressing room because he was taking a beating.

Looking at Strongbow now, I can see that he's held up pretty well after all those years in the ring. Wrestling men like Blassie isn't too good for your health, but Strongbow survived. Blassie did, too.

You see, wrestlers are tough. They're cut from a different mold, hard as nails and able to withstand any kind of punishment. Strongbow and Blassie had a war, but they both survived. And that says more about the toughness of wrestlers than any 10 men with typewriters ever can. □

YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 7)

sport today.

One thing that has bothered me for a long time was mentioned prominently in the article. Too many people have accused Jeff of getting an easy ride in wrestling because his father, Jerry Jarrett, is the CWA promoter. I've never heard anything so crazy in my life! Jerry Jarrett is a bastion of integrity in a sport filled with unscrupulous characters—and Jeff has picked up where his father left off. Jeff may be the most scientific man left in wrestling today!

Look at it this way. If Jeff was being protected by his father, would he have suffered all the career-threatening injuries, such as a separated

shoulder and a broken arm, that he has had to come back from? I don't think so. Just seeing Jeff get into the ring to take on opponents like Kamala and Robert Fuller, who both tower over the youngster, fills my heart with pride. He may have lost some blood and broken a few bones, but he's shown that he can defeat any opponent he gets into the ring with.

Now that Jeff has been wrestling in World Class and the AWA, more and more people are sure to find out what I've known all along. This handsome young man is a best bet to become the next CWA champion!

JOAN HURLEY
Wrigley, TN

FLAIR FOR CHEATING

I've just witnessed the long-awaited match between Lex Luger and Ric Flair at Starrcade '88. It was a fast-paced contest throughout, with both men possessing equivalent momentum.

For the first time in Lord knows how long, Flair won via pinfall—but I was appalled for the umpteenth time because of J.J. Dillon's interference. Simply put, J.J. doesn't belong at ringside while Flair engages in combat with the sport's top gladiators.

The disqualification stipulation for the match was a terrific idea, but how about banning J.J. from appearing at ringside? Then we'll see how "Slick Ric" can *truly* fare—without having someone there to win *for* him.

DIANE SEALS
Jenks, OK

(Continued on page 46)



Jeff Jarrett executes a sunset flip on Eric Embry. Reader Joan Hurley is glad that people outside Memphis are finally recognizing Jarrett as a great talent.

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STING: "I took all the fight out of **RIC FLAIR!**"

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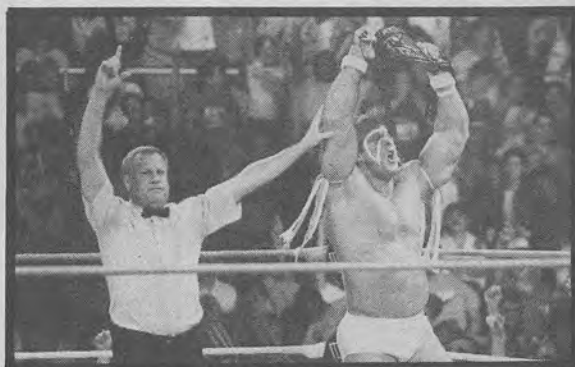
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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 44)

LOVE POWER

Bob Smith is full of hot air! In "Blindsided" in the March 1989 issue, all Smith does is complain about how terrible Brother Love is. I *totally* disagree. In fact, I consider Brother Love to be the savior of the WWF!



Brother Love's message of love is not lost on reader Arthur Packard, who admires Love for standing up to the WWF's fan favorites.

Smith mentions that interview segments on TV used to be hosted by men like Roddy Piper and Jesse Ventura. Those guys were *always* biased! Now the WWF has an impartial observer who can put up with Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage, and all of those other blowhards. Few men have the courage to criticize these fan favorites because of their constant rulebreaking. Only Love has had the moral righteousness to do so.

Brother Love is a breath of fresh air! Like Bobby Heenan says, if more people would listen to his message of love, the world would be a much better place in which to live.

ARTHUR PACKARD
Boston

SHEIK SHRIEKS

How dare you give The Iron Sheik space in your magazine to spout his anti-American drivel ("Q & A," March 1989)! I just read your interview with this maggot, and I've never read such garbage in my life!

This overrated fluke of a former champion has the nerve to say that he won his feud against Sgt. Slaughter. He must think the fans have pretty short memories! There's no doubt



The Iron Sheik should not be given space in this magazine to air his views, writes Dave Camen, who's waiting for Sgt. Slaughter to wrestle Sheik again.

that Slaughter wiped the mat with him during the glory days of their war, winning match after match. I'm also glad to see Sheik and Slaughter are locking up again in the AWA. Now Slaughter can finish the job he started five years ago.

I won't be happy until the Sheik goes back to Iran to stay, and I know that Slaughter feels the same way. Get rid of the bum!

DAVE CAMEN
Los Angeles □

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October 1983/COLOR PINUP: Junkyard Dog. **Tommy Rich**, Johnson, Adonis, Rhodes, Piper.

November 1983/COLOR PINUP: Roddy Piper. **Harley Race**, Santana, Mascaras, Ellering, Valiant, Race.

December 1983/COLOR PINUP: Wahoo McDaniel. **Dusty Rhodes**, Hayes, Steamboat, Hansen, DiBiase.

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February 1984/COLOR PINUP: Jim Garvin & Sunshine. **Greg Valentine**, Super Destroyer, Race, Sawyer, Abdullah.

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July 1984/COLOR PINUP: Paul Ellering. **Jimmy Valiant**, JYD, Fab Ones, Gagne, Windham.

August 1984/COLOR PINUP: Stan Hansen. **Jerry Lawler**, Sullivan, Slaughter, Blackwell & Patera, Flair.

October 1984/COLOR PINUP: Billy Jack. **Kerry Von Erich**, Martel, Blanchard, Fabulous Blonds, Armstrong.

November 1984/COLOR PINUP: Rick Martel. **Sgt. Slaughter**, Von Erich, Road Warriors, Windham, Rotundo.

January 1985/COLOR PINUP: Tito Santana. **Road Warriors**, Billy Jack, Hayes, 1984 fan ballot.

February 1985/COLOR PINUP: Magnum T.A. **Rick Martel**, Hogan, Backlund, Ellering.

April 1985/COLOR PINUP: Ronnie Garvin. **Jimmy Snuka**, Warriors, Gordy, Flair, Rhodes.

June 1985/COLOR PINUP: Barry Windham. **Dusty Rhodes**, Slaughter, Hogan, Von Erich, T.A.

July 1985/COLOR PINUP: Sgt. Slaughter. **Hogan vs. Piper**, Warriors, One Man Gang, T.A., Martel.

September 1985/COLOR PINUP: Junkyard Dog. **Magnum T.A.**, Von Erich, Hogan, AWA scouting reports.

October 1985/COLOR PINUP: Chris Adams. **Rick Steamboat**, Warriors, Nikita, WWF scouting reports.

November 1985/COLOR PINUP: Randy Savage. **Ric Flair**, Slaughter, Steamboat, World Class scouting reports.

December 1985/COLOR PINUP: Jesse Ventura. **Great American Bash**, Von Erich, Orndorff, Williams & DiBiase.

January 1986/COLOR PINUP: Hack-saw Duggan. **Hulk Hogan**, T.A., Brody.

February 1986/COLOR PINUP: Nikita Koloff. **Mike Von Erich**, Warriors, Santana, Taylor, Barbarian, Race.

April 1986/COLOR PINUP: Ric Flair. **Wendi Richter**, Adams & Hernandez, Dusty & Warriors vs. Flair & Andersons.

May 1986/COLOR PINUP: Rick Steamboat. **Road Warriors**, Humongous, Bulldogs, Hansen vs. Martel.

June 1986/COLOR PINUP: Kevin Von Erich. **Hulk Hogan**, Adams, Duggan, Scott Hall.

July 1986/COLOR PINUP: King Kong Bundy. **R & R Express**, Hall and Hennig, Ventura, Warriors.

August 1986/COLOR PINUP: Dusty Rhodes. **Randy Savage**, Luger vs. Race, Blanchard vs. Flair, Rude.

October 1986/COLOR PINUP: John Studd. **Nikita Koloff**, Savage vs. Bundy, Landell, Flair vs. Luger, Simpson.

November 1986/COLOR PINUP: Baby Doll. **British Bulldogs**, Von Erich, Hansen, Gordy, Flair-Tully-Arn-Ole.

December 1986/COLOR PINUP: Great American Bash. **Great American Bash**, Midnight Rockers, Von Erich, Windham.

January 1987/COLOR PINUP: Fabulous Freebirds. **Roddy Piper**, Nikita vs. T.A., Snuka, Simpson.

February 1987/COLOR PINUP: Savage & Elizabeth. **UWF Tournament**, T.A., Baby Doll, Hogan vs. Orndorff.

April 1987/COLOR PINUP: Lex Luger. **Dusty & Nikita**, DiBiase, DeBeers, Dingo, WWF Housecleaning.



MAY 1987

May 1987/COLOR PINUP: Steve Williams. **Andre-Hogan**, UWF Tourney, Albano, Cornette, Dynamite Kid, Kerry.

June 1987/COLOR PINUP: Hulk Hogan. **Magnum T.A.**, Can-Am's, Warriors, Freebirds, Hall.

July 1987/COLOR PINUP: Midnight Rockers. **Steamboat-Savage**, Luger, Duggan, Garvins, Sting.

August 1987/COLOR PINUP: Jim Garvin & Precious. **Hogan-Andre**, Warriors, Windham-Flair, Gordy, Bigelow.

October 1987/COLOR PINUP: Ted DiBiase. **Ric Flair**, Williams, Rockers, Hogan vs. Steamboat, NWA & WWF.

November 1987/COLOR PINUP: George Steele. **Nikita Koloff**, Warriors, Harts, Hogan, Windham.

January 1988/COLOR PINUP: The Road Warriors. **Ted DiBiase**, Flair-Garvins, Hogan & Ventura, Zbyszko.

February 1988/COLOR PINUP: Ronnie Garvin. **Randy Savage**, Garvin-Flair, Von Erichs, Freebirds.

April 1988/COLOR PINUP: Rick Martel. **Lex Luger**, Flair-Garvin, Kerry, Survivor Series, Iron Sheik.

May 1988/COLOR PINUP: Sting. **Andre**, Valentine-Beefcake, Flair, Cornette, Owen Hart.

June 1988/COLOR PINUP: Tully Blanchard. **Hulk Hogan**, Muraco, Perez, Rockers, Bunkhouse Stampede.

July 1988/COLOR PINUP: Curt Hennig. **Hogan vs. Andre**, Express vs. Rockers, Beefcake, Perez, Rotundo-Sting.

August 1988/COLOR PINUP: Al Perez. **Savage & Hogan**, Gilbert-Lawler, Four Horsemen, Kerry Von Erich.

October 1988/COLOR PINUP: Ultimate Warrior. **Sting**, Savage, Lawler, Williams, Steamboat, Varsity Club.

November 1988/COLOR PINUP: The Midnight Express. **Hogan**, Rhodes, Express, Powers of Pain.

December 1988/COLOR PINUP: Hack-saw Duggan. **Four Horsemen**, Brody, Bigelow, Garvin, Precious.

January 1989/COLOR PINUP: Barry Windham. **Hogan-Savage-Elizabeth**, Warriors, Sting.

February 1989/COLOR PINUP: Jake Roberts. **Luger**, Hogan-Savage, Kevin Von, Beefcake-Bass.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 8)



Jerry Lawler, in effect, kisses the AWA World title belt goodbye after the AWA stripped him of the championship for missing seven mandatory title defenses.

"An AWA World champion *has* to defend in the AWA," said Blackburn. "Lawler missed several important cards, showing total disregard for our fans here. At this point, it looks like we're going to hold a tournament to determine a new champion. Lawler has no one to blame but himself."

As far as Lawler is concerned, he's *still* a world champion—he continues to hold the "unified" belt that was created for him. *The Wrestler*, however, will not be recognizing Lawler's championship validity beyond the World Class title he currently holds.

WWF World champion **Randy Savage** has surprised just about everybody by signing for a series of matches against Intercontinental champion **The Ultimate Warrior** throughout February. Many of those matches, including Savage's February 20 bout at New York's Madison Square Garden, were to be non-title contests, but it's a rarity when the WWF pits two of its most popular stars in the same match.

A host of American wrestlers have been venturing to Japan in

recent weeks. Immediately after dropping a loser-leave-town match to **Robert Fuller** on January 23, the impressive **Sid Vicious** signed for a tour of Japan . . . Also heading to the Orient will be **The Road Warriors** and **Ric Flair**, who were scheduled to tour there in early March. **Animal** and **Hawk** will defend their NWA six-man title with **Genichiro Tenryu**, while Flair was scheduled to defend the World title against Tenryu and **Jumbo Tsuruta** . . . **Joe Malenko**, son of 1960s star **Boris Malenko**, won the Pacific Wrestling Federation junior heavyweight title from **Masanobu Fuchi** on January 20, but lost the belt five days later to **Mighty Inoue**.

Even though he's supposedly retired from the sport, **Roddy Piper** continues to make news. **The Grappler** and **Buddy Rose** stole the Pacific Northwest tag team belts from **The Southern Rockers**, **Steve Doll** and **Scott Petersen**, after a recent match in Portland, Oregon. Later, Rose and Grappler attacked Petersen, whose left arm was in a sling, during an interview. Piper, clad in street clothes, ran

the rulebreakers off—but not before grabbing the tag belts back from them. This was the second time in a month that Piper has gotten involved in Pacific Northwest activities. By the way, Piper's latest movie, *Buy And Cell*, opened in New York on January 27.

Several NWA stars are following **Dusty Rhodes** into the Florida Championship Wrestling area. **Al Perez** and **Dick Murdoch** are now competing there, and Perez is lusting after the FCW championship currently held by **Mike Graham**. In other Florida news, **Johnny Ace** and **The Terminator** regained the FCW tag team title from **The Nasty Boys** on January 26 in Tampa.

Ken Patera left the WWF and has resurfaced in the Intercontinental Wrestling Federation, an independent organization based in Minnesota. **Jim Brunzell**, **Tom Zenk**, and **Baron Von Raschke** have also been competing there . . . **Rufus R. Jones** is the "king" of the World Wrestling Council. The veteran was coronated at a recent card in San Juan. After **Bobby Shane**, **Ernie Ladd**, **Jerry Lawler**, **Harley Race**, and **Haku**, these kings are getting hard to keep track of!

Johnny Smith lost the Stampede British Commonwealth title to **Chris Benoit**, the man he took it from, on January 26 in Calgary. **Gama Singh**, however, has returned to the area and is demanding a title match against Benoit. "Benoit is a totally untalented Canadian specimen," Singh boasted. "He is no match for the great Singh. It is imperative that I win the title so that I may join **Makhan** and **Vulkan Singh**, who hold the tag team championship, as masters of Stampede. The Singhs will dominate wrestling!"

And that's what's happening. See you at the matches! □

BACK ISSUES OF



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August 1979/Stories include: Flair, Garvin, Race, Sammartino.

September 1979/Stories include: Steamboat, Mascaras, Strongbow, Garvin.

February 1980/Stories include: Patera, Snuka, Santana, Albano.

April 1980/Stories include: Hogan, Rich, Backlund, Mascaras.

May 1980/Stories include: Sammartino, Murdoch, Mulligan, Bockwinkel.

June 1980/Stories include: Putski, Andre, Hernandez, Keirn.

August 1980/Stories include: Sammartino, Wrestling II, Baker, Koloff.

September 1980/Stories include: Mascaras, Rhodes, Ladd, Iron Sheik.

November 1980/Stories include: Rhodes, Putski, Bockwinkel, Koloff.

January 1981/Stories include: Race, Snuka, Morales, Slater.

April 1981/Stories include: Albano, Sammartino Jr., Race, McGraw.

May 1981/Stories include: Iron Sheik, Von Erich, Backlund, Santana.

June 1981/Stories include: Rhodes, Hansen, Piper, Gagne.

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January 1982/Stories include: Flair, Hogan, Race, Humberdink.

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March 1982/Stories include: Rich, Backlund, Idol, Spoiler.

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May 1982/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, Hogan, Von Erich.

June 1982/Stories include: Valentine, Von Erich, Slaughter, Morales.

July 1982/Stories include: Hogan, Rhodes, Steamboat, Adonis.

August 1982/Stories include: Andre, Bockwinkel, Steamboat, Backlund.

September 1982/Stories include: Atlas, Piper, Lawler, Brody.

October 1982/Stories include: Rich, Andre, Piper, Dillon.

November 1982/Stories include: Flair, Snuka, Von Erich, Slaughter.

December 1982/Stories include: Mulligan, Rich, Lawler, Grand Wizard.

February 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Hogan, DiBiase, Race.

March 1983/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Graham, Johnson, Funk.

April 1983/Stories include: Snuka, Patera, Kabuki, Rich.

May 1983/Stories include: Rich, Snuka, Sullivan, Steamboat.

June 1983/Stories include: Studd, Garvin, Rogers, Orton.

July 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Freebirds, Rhodes, Youngblood.

August 1983/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Garvin, Sullivan, Lawler.

September 1983/Stories include: Zbyszko, Piper, Andre, Hayes.

October 1983/Stories include: Wrestling II, Backlund, Junkyard Dog, Rhodes.

November 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Reed, Von Erich, Dillon.

December 1983/Stories include: Von Erich, Samoans, Valiant, Road Warriors.

March 1984/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Rich, Rhodes, Garvin.

April 1984/Stories include: Flair, Steamboat, Superstar, Windham.

May 1984/Stories include: Iron Sheik, Steamboat, Rotundo, Von Erich.

June 1984/Stories include: Flair, Slaughter, Cornette, DiBiase.

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August 1984/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Magnum T.A., Idol, Spoiler.

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October 1984/Stories include: Billy Jack, Road Warriors, Steamboat, Piper.

November 1984/Stories include: Rhodes, Rich, Hernandez, Warriors.

December 1984/Stories include: Hogan, Warriors, Sullivan, Magnum T.A.

January 1985/Stories include: Magnum T.A., Rhodes, Atlas, Von Erich.

February 1985/Stories include: Rich, Adams, Valiant, Flair.

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April 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Albano & Hogan, Steamboat, Gordy.

May 1985/Stories include: Slaughter, Garvin, Albano, Koloffs.

June 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Slaughter, Von Erichs, Studd & Patera.

July 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Von Erich, Nikita, Warriors.

August 1985/Stories include: Wrestlingmania, Zbyszko vs. The Tonga Kid.

September 1985/Stories include: Piper, Flair, Fantastics, Magnum T.A.

October 1985/Stories include: Russian menace, Von Erichs, Rude & Barr.

November 1985/Stories include: Steamboat, Adams, Freebirds, Cornette.

December 1985/Stories include: Santana, Brody, Andersons, Murdoch.

January 1986/Stories include: Steamboat, Mike Von Erich, Warriors.

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March 1986/Stories include: Windham & Rotundo, Warriors-Russians, Rude.

April 1986/Stories include: Scott Hall, Rhodes, Flair, Andre, Bill Watts.

May 1986/Stories include: Randy Savage, Stan Hansen, Rock 'n' Rolls.

June 1986/Stories include: Bulldogs, Windham-Flair, Lance Von, Blanchard.

July 1986/All-American Special Issue. Stories include: Hogan, Slaughter, T.A.

August 1986/Stories include: Wrestlingmania 2, Garvins, Martel, Fab Ones.

September 1986/Stories include: Andre, Rhodes-T.A., Adams, Windham.

October 1986/Stories include: Flair-Luger, Savage, Fantastics, Warriors.

November 1986/Stories include: Warriors-Flair, Bulldogs, Watts, Adams.

December 1986/Stories include: Hogan-Adonis, R&R Express, Baby Doll.

January 1987/Stories include: Rude-Flair, Piper, T.A., Taylor.

February 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Piper-Orndorff, Taylor, Flair.

March 1987/Stories include: Flair, Missy, Luger, Bulldogs, Koloffs.

April 1987/Stories include: Windham, Steamboat, Ellering, Duggan.

May 1987/Stories include: Windham & Luger, Steamboat, Hogan-Andre.

June 1987/Stories include: Piper-Adonis, Horsemen, Adams, Hall, Brody.

July 1987/Stories include: Danny Davis, DiBiase, Rockers, Rotundo, Andersons.

August 1987/Stories include: Dusty & Nikita, Hogan, Mike Von, Cornette.

September 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Race, R&R Exp., Rich, Honky Tonk.

October 1987/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan, Taylor-Adams, Lawler.

November 1987/Stories include: War Games, Mr. T, Bulldogs, Rhodes.

December 1987/Stories include: Freebirds, Rhodes, Magnum, Savage, Perez.

January 1988/Stories include: R&R-Horsemen, Hogan, Flair-Garvin.

February 1988/Stories include: Savage, Kevin Von, Sting, Tully & Arn.

March 1988/Stories include: Bigelow, Adams, Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.

April 1988/Stories include: Luger-Flair, Ultimate Warrior, Andre-Hogan-DiBiase.

May 1988/Stories include: Zbyszko, DiBiase, Warriors, Rockers, Fritz Von.

June 1988/Stories include: Warriors, Savage, R&R Express, Baby Doll.

July 1988/Stories include: Hogan-Savage-DiBiase, Kerry & Hayes, Sting.

August 1988/Stories include: Savage, Missy Hyatt, Sting, Hayes, Honky Tonk.

September 1988/SPECIAL ISSUE: Color coverage of WMIV, Parade of Champs, Crockett Cup. Plus: Lawler, Von Erich, Hart, Cornette.

October 1988/Stories include: Megapowers vs. Megabucks, Horsemen, Lawler.

November 1988/Stories include: Kerry vs. Lawler, Windham, Luger, Muraco.

December 1988/Stories include: Powers of Pain, Ultimate, Flair, Piper.

January 1989/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan, Sting, Arn, Kerry-Lawler.

February 1989/Stories include: Hogan-Bossman, Tully & Arn, Warriors-Windham-Sting.

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SID VICIOUS

(Continued from page 31)

heard about him; you know, the wrestling community is pretty tight. He made a good move by starting out in the CWA. He should stay there for a while, *then* move on to the big time."

But patience or putting too much credence in press clippings was never Scott Hall's problem. Hall got caught up in a feud with Col. DeBeers back in 1987 and hasn't recovered since. "DeBeers was wrong, and I *still* say he was wrong," Hall said. "The thing was, I wasn't looking out for myself enough. I should've been fighting for a world title, not against the problems of the world."

Hall has changed since then. He recently returned to Florida, but is no longer cheered. "Another one of my problems was listening to the fans too much. They can soften you up, make you forget your goals. Well, I have only one goal now, and that's to win a world championship. Sid Vicious? Don't ask me about Sid Vicious. I couldn't care less *what* he does."

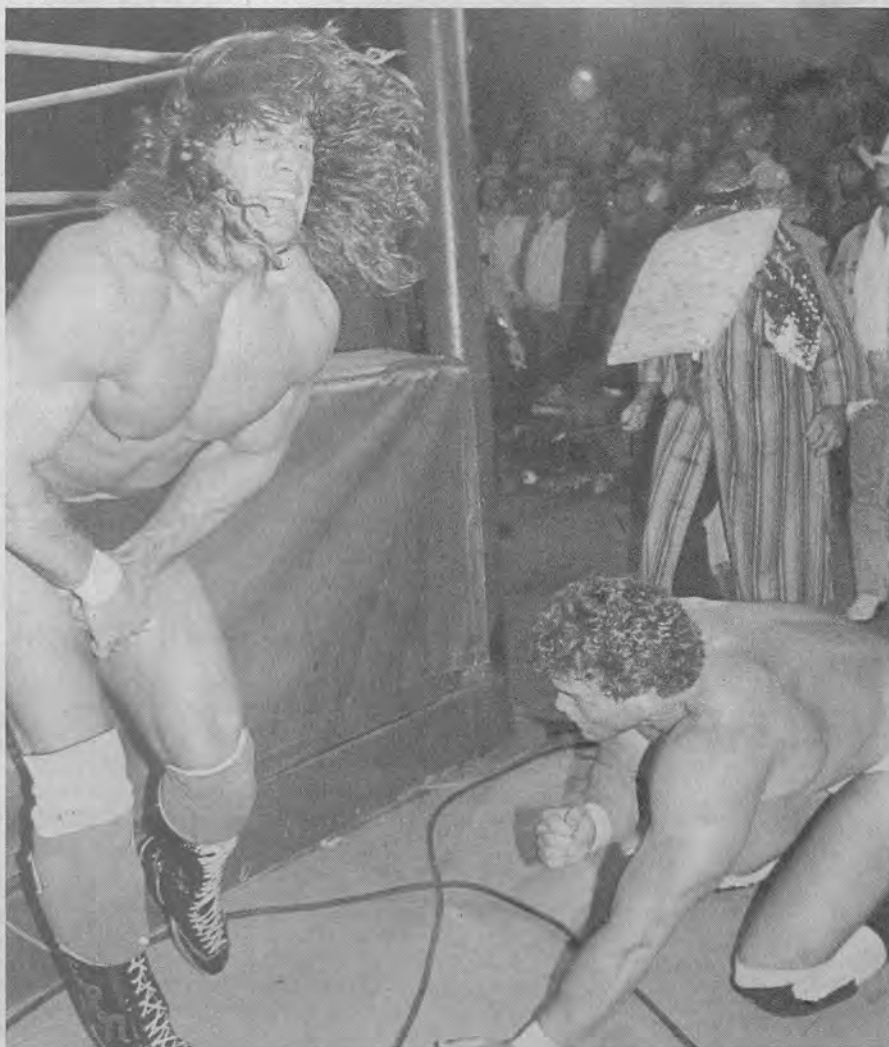
Hall has a long way to go before reaching the top; in fact, there's some doubt as to whether he'll ever fulfill the destiny prescribed for him by the press. "Some guys have it, some guys don't," said veteran columnist Matt Brock. "Sometimes the press is just wrong; sometimes we're right, but a guy doesn't develop or doesn't put enough into it. Who knows what happens?"

Three men currently in the NWA—Lex Luger, Bam Bam Bigelow, and Sting—have never been in danger of not reaching the top. All three have proven they belong in the national spotlight. None have won a world title, but it's certain that, in the future, some talented youngster will be labeled the next Lex Luger, Bam Bam Bigelow, or Sting.

"It's all a matter of hard work and never forgetting where you came from," said Sting, a top contender to the NWA World title for the past year. "You have to set a goal, keep it narrow, and always go for it. Never get



Sid Vicious threatens Kerry Von Erich with a forearm smash (above). Kerry recoils from a Vicious blow (below). Von Erich has called Vicious the most awesome man he's ever wrestled—and Vicious is only a rookie.





Vicious, once a member of The Stud Stable, sends Robert Fuller toward the ringpost.

off that path. Once you get sidetracked, you're just wasting time."

Luger agrees. "My biggest mistake was getting in with J.J. Dillon and The Four Horsemen," he said. "I just wasted a year of my career. I won the U.S. title, but I spent a whole year without ever getting a shot at Flair. In fact, when I finally *did* wrestle him, it had been nearly 21 months since my last title shot. The thing is to aim high. Go for it all."

Bigelow is often criticized for bouncing from one federation to another, but he's been a major star in both the WWF and NWA. "Maybe I've never won a world title, but I'm making the big bucks," said Bigelow, currently on a brief tour of Japan. "When you get right down to it, that's the bottom line. Go for the bucks. Forget the other crap."

The recipe is clear: Set a narrow goal, set it high, and always work toward that goal. Don't get sidetracked, work hard, don't do too much reading about yourself, and be patient.

"There's nothing worse than knowing you could've been something and not making it," Spivey said. "I'm making it now, but there were some bad times. Sometimes, though, I think of what it would be like to fail. It's that fear of failure that keeps me going. You know, the test never ends."

It's a test Sid Vicious is already taking, one that will decide whether he is to become the next Hulk Hogan—or a massive hulk of unfulfilled potential. ☐

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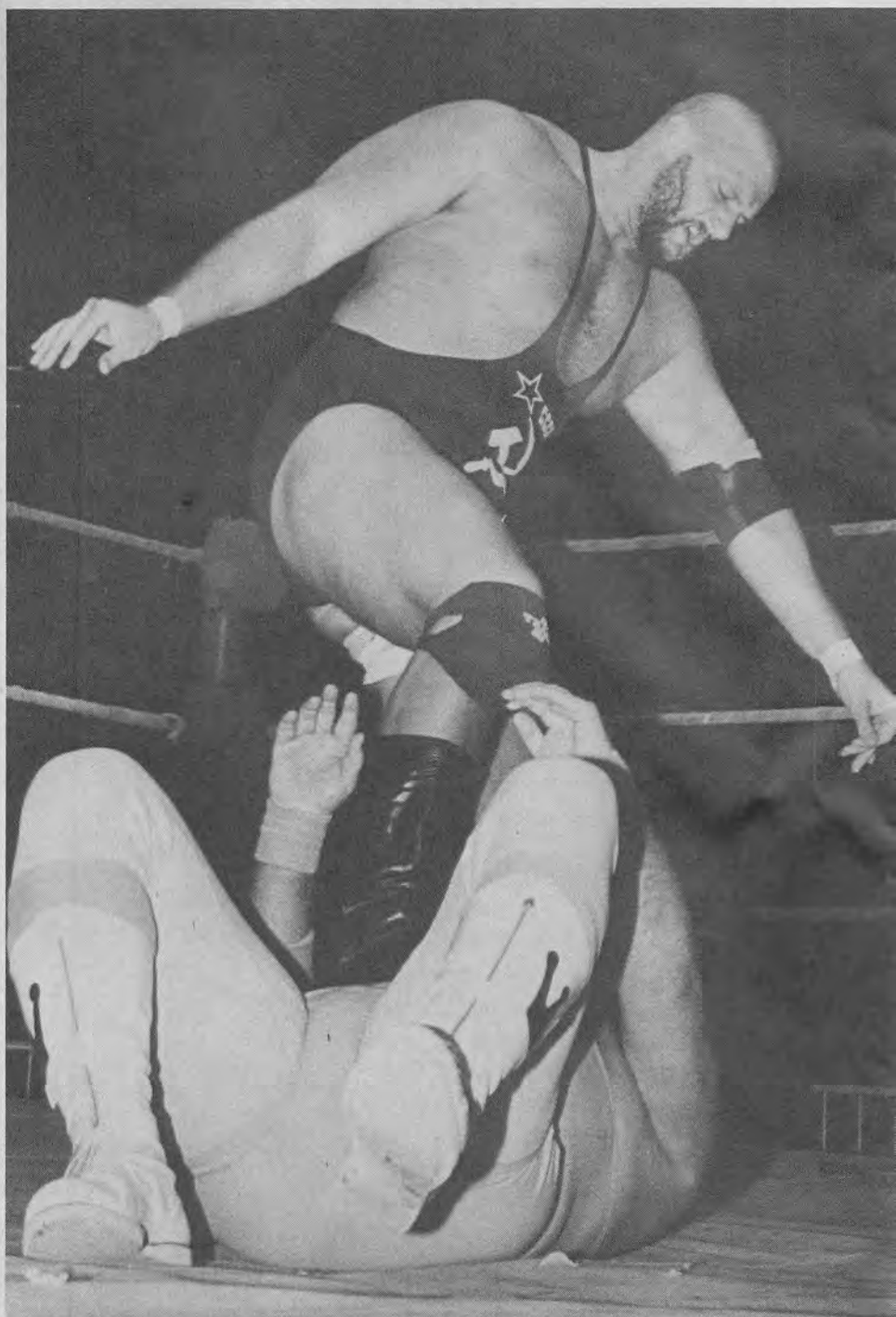
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WIN, LOSE, OR DRAW

(Continued from page 10)



Ustinov stomps on Jerry Lawler. The Russian wasn't impressed by what he saw in Washington. Unlike Ivan and Nikita Koloff, Ustinov is not ready to embrace the American way of life, preferring to reminisce about his homeland.

tone of his voice, however, didn't convince me he was sincere.

"And look," he shouted. "There is son of Mr. Bush."

No, I replied, that's Dan Quayle, the new vice president, though I admitted that Quayle could almost pass for the President's son.

"Yes," Ustinov agreed. "He is

too young. Young and stupid-looking. A typical stupid American politician. In Russia, we have statesmen. They are honorable men, not liars and cheaters who steal money from your people."

I was beginning to wonder why Ustinov wanted to come. Did he really want to learn, or just mock everything in sight? Maybe he'd

learn something positive from the inaugural address.

"Words, just words," Ustinov scoffed. "It is obvious to me that your President does not mean everything he say. Why is he so nice to these Democrats when he just beat them last year? He should want to *crush* them."

I explained that it is an American tradition to reach out to your opponent after the election and pledge to work together, at least for the first few months.

"This may be so," Ustinov said, "but I am not impressed with your American system of government. Things make much more sense in Soviet Union. I am beginning to see it was mistake to come here. I find out nothing useful. Come, I am hungry. Let us get something to eat."

Ustinov's appetite for democracy may have left him, but there was nothing wrong with his appetite for food. Diners watched in awe and amazement as the Russian downed five medium-rare steaks, seven soft drinks, and four pieces of cherry pie. As we prepared to pay the check, a young man sidled up to the table and asked Ustinov for his autograph.

"I don't care what anybody says, Mr. Ustinov," the fan said, "you're one of my favorite wrestlers."

"Finally," Ustinov rejoiced, "An intelligent American wrestling fan. You see, Rodriguez, there are still some smart people left in this country, and they are not the politicians. Young man, I am happy to put my name on this piece of paper. Now you can tell all your friends you have met the great Soldat Ustinov."

On the train ride back to New York, it occurred to me that Ustinov has a stereotypical view of the United States, and he isn't about to change it too easily.

Maybe a few days with Nikita Koloff would change his outlook. ☐

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DUSTY RHODES

(Continued from page 33)

fought off Rhodes with an outstanding scientific and aerial attack, combined with a bit of rulebreaking and outside interference by manager J.J. Dillon and Horseman partner Ric

Flair.

"I've tried all I can to beat him, but it ain't gonna happen as long as that kind of interference is allowed to take place," Rhodes said. "I

know I can get that belt back if I give it enough time, but I ain't got the time to give anymore. I created the 'American Dream' in Florida, and now I'm goin' back."

Specifically, Rhodes has signed with Florida Championship Wrestling, an independent federation that runs cards in many of the areas where the Florida arm of the NWA was once based.

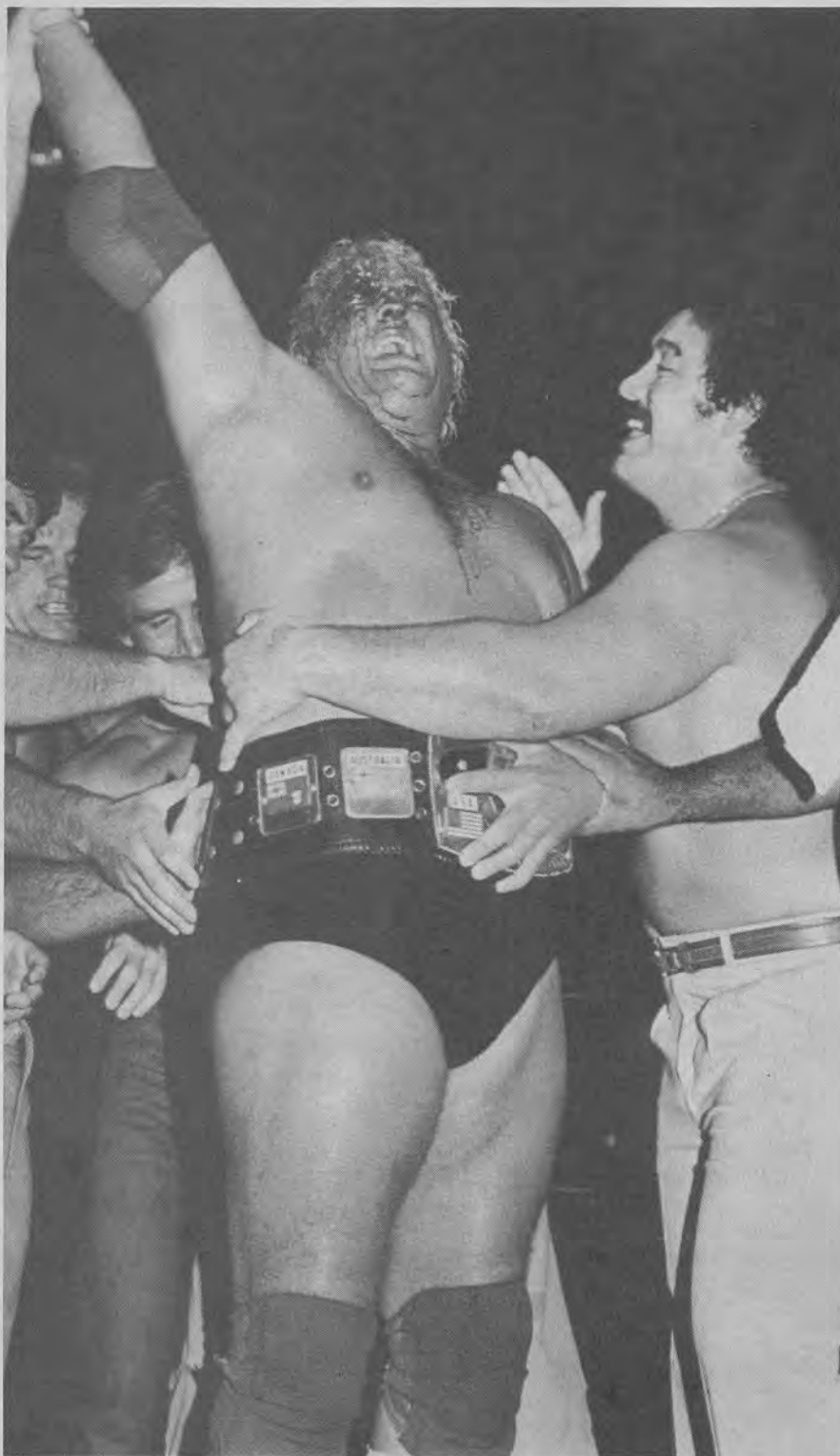
"The bad moments, the great moments, that's where they've all been, back in the Sunshine State where the 'Dream' belongs, baby," Rhodes said. "I don't know why it is, maybe it's that Florida sunshine, but that place always brings out the best in Dusty Rhodes."

And there have been great moments. On October 6, 1975, Rhodes set a Florida record by dethroning Florida champion Bob Roop in only one minute. During the 1970s, Rhodes smashed every existing Florida attendance record. On August 21, 1979, in Tampa, he won his first NWA World title by defeating Harley Race. The reign lasted only five days and ended in Orlando.

There is, however, another reason why Rhodes is basing himself in Florida: He wants all his former enemies and friends to know *exactly* where they can find him.

"This is my comin' home tour, 'cept I'm not going anywhere," Rhodes said. "I'm stayin' put and, for once, everybody's gonna have to come after *me*. I'm talkin' 'bout Dory Funk Jr., Abdullah the Butcher, Dickie Slater, Harley Race, Tully Blanchard, Barry Windham, Ric Flair, Kevin Sullivan—anybody that wants me, they know my address."

Rhodes has had vicious feuds with all those wrestlers. Several are no longer wrestling in the NWA, and a few are out of the sport entirely. But Dusty would like nothing better than to draw Slater and Funk out of "their hidin' places," and Race and Blanchard out of the



Dusty's hand is raised in victory as his friends strap the NWA World title belt around his waist following his 1979 win over Harley Race in Tampa. This was one of many happy moments Dusty experienced when he wrestled in the Sunshine State.

WWF.

"I've still got a score to settle with *all* those guys," Rhodes said. "Even some of my friends, if they've got a problem with me, this is their chance to settle things. Dickie Murdoch, come on down if there's something you got on your mind. J.J. Dillon, Gary Hart, Abdullah, I'm right here waitin' for you. We're gonna settle some past accounts."

There is, however, another purpose to Rhodes' return to Florida. He wishes to reacquaint himself with some of his old fans while wrestling in arenas that are sure to bring back memories. He'll also have the opportunity to wrestle with FCW champion Mike Graham, son of Eddie Graham. "Eddie Graham taught me everything I know, and it'll be a great honor to wrestle beside his son once again," Rhodes said.

Veteran announcer Gordon Solie, who is now working for Florida Championship Wrestling, is also looking forward to Dusty's return. "This will be a great treat for me and for the fans of Florida to see one of the finest wrestlers of all time once again," Solie said. "We're talking about a man who has won every major title the sport has to offer. If anybody belongs in Florida, Dusty does."

Rhodes is quick to point out, however, that this is not the final stage of his career. He would welcome a title shot against World champion Ric Flair if given the opportunity ... under one condition.

"He's gotta come to Florida. Same goes for Windham and all the rest. I'd love to win another title, but it's gotta be down here."

He's had enough of the difficult travel that goes with being a top wrestler. He's had enough of staying in a different motel every night. He has already accomplished so much. Dusty Rhodes is a certified wrestling legend.

Now, the "American Dream" has found his final wrestling place. ☐

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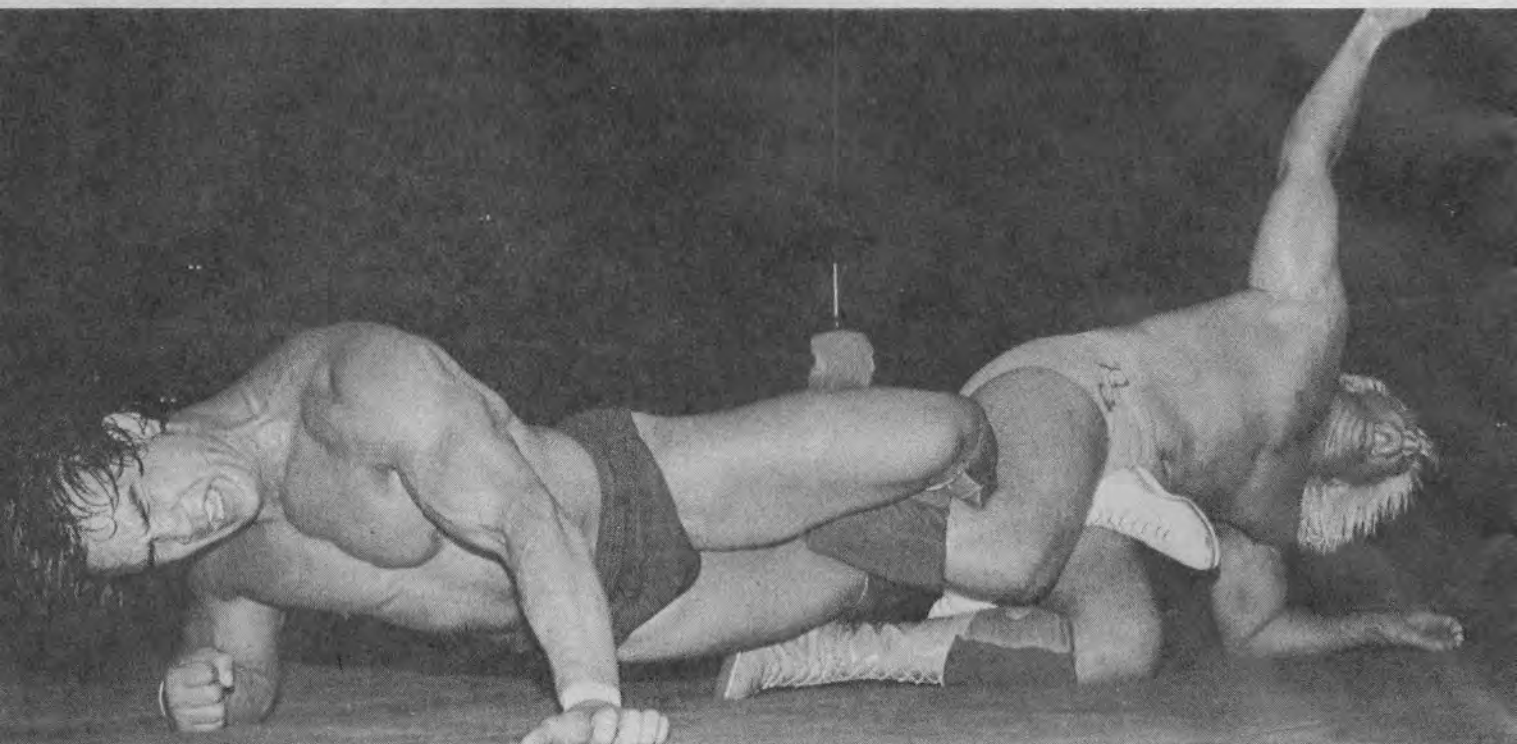
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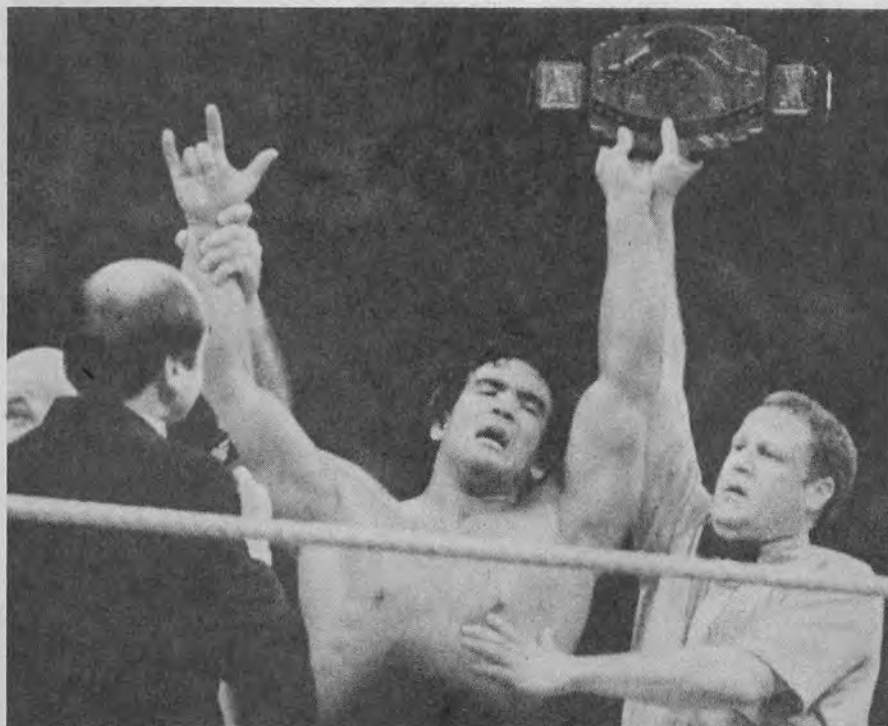
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RICK STEAMBOAT

(Continued from page 35)



Two great moments in Rick Steamboat's career: resisting Ric Flair's figure-four leglock during a 1984 shot at Flair's NWA World title (above), and being awarded the Intercontinental belt at WrestleMania III in 1987 (below).



Then, in 1983, Steamboat and Jay Youngblood formed an outstanding tag team in the NWA. Over an incredible 10-month period, Steamboat and Youngblood won the tag belts three times. Their reigns lasted three months

and six days, eight days, and a little more than a month before Steamboat decided to retire and devote his time to managing his gym.

Later in 1984, however, Steamboat returned and defeated Dick

Slater for the U.S. heavyweight title on April 21. Two months and three days later, that title reign came to an end at the hands of Wahoo McDaniel, an experienced veteran with great determination, but certainly not as accomplished an athlete as Steamboat.

Why can't Steamboat hold a title for more than five or six months at a time? Certainly, long title reigns are the exception rather than the rule in wrestling, but Steamboat is capable of being the exception. He has talent equal to that of Ric Flair, Randy Savage, Jerry Lawler, and any of the most respected wrestlers in the sport. Why does Steamboat's game fall a notch or two once he attains what he spent so long seeking?

"It's something that's disturbed me," Steamboat admitted. "I'd argue against it, but I can't; the proof is there. I don't think I'm any better or any worse when I become champion. I'm basically the same person. The thing is, when you look at my career, I've always set my sights on top

champions. I've never gone after a weak wrestler. So when I win their titles, they come right back after me. It's tough to string wins together against the top guns."

There's no denying the fact, however, that Steamboat's greatest matches have been as a challenger. Who will ever forget his title victory over Savage at WrestleMania III, or the previous battles against the "Macho Man" leading up to that match? And how about the epic Flair-Steamboat showdown at Byrne Meadowlands Arena in New Jersey on May 29, 1984?

Now, quickly: name one great successful Steamboat title defense.

"He has this incredible determination when he's after a title," said Steamboat's former Mid-Atlantic rival Roddy Piper. "He has this fire in his eyes, like a wild animal after its prey, and it brings his skills up to this amazing level. Then, when he finally wins the belt, it's almost like a letdown. He's spent all this time going after the title, and now he has it. There's no way his intensity level can be as high. So, he lets up a little and loses."

Perhaps the next Steamboat title reign will last longer. Perhaps his recent return to the sport will help him maintain his intensity level. After all, Steamboat is well-rested and should be able to go full-speed for many months. And, of course, matches against Flair have always brought out the best in Steamboat.

There is a new challenge awaiting Steamboat. The challenge isn't winning the title; he has already proven his ability to dethrone great champions. The challenge is in *keeping* the belt. It is a challenge he has never been able to meet.

Because, until proven otherwise, Rick Steamboat: Champion can't compare with Rick Steamboat: Challenger. ☐

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INTRODUCING

(Continued from page 20)



Holliday's chinlock on Eric Sbraccia comes close to being a choke. As a color commentator, Holliday gets to insult the men he'll eventually face in the ring, like Austin Idol, Willie B. Hert, and Tom Prichard.

Holliday turned down scholarships from several top colleges in order to train for World Cup competition. In July 1982, he defeated three-time defending champion Leonid Brostrov of the Soviet Union to win the Cup in Birmingham, England. He spent the next three years wrestling in college, but turning professional consumed his thoughts.

"I had gone as far as I could as an amateur," recalled Holliday. "I wanted the money and prestige that only pro wrestling could bring." On July 25, 1986, he met Road Warrior Animal, who referred him to former NWA stars Gene Anderson and Nelson Royal. He later trained with veterans Dory Funk Jr., Paul Jones, Ivan

Koloff, and Rick Steamboat.

"Those guys really put me through the ringer," said Holliday. "This was much tougher than anything I had ever done as an amateur. I left those camps almost in a state of shock. But looking back at it, I'm glad I went through it. I can't think of another wrestler with better overall training than yours truly."

Holliday began his pro career in the Stampede area in January 1988, and garnered a fine record while displaying a vast repertoire of suplexes and other scientific skills. He came close to winning the North American and British Commonwealth titles while training under Calgary's legendary Hart family, but this is one man

who's not used to waiting for what he wants.

"It didn't take long to realize I was hanging out with the wrong crowd," said Holliday. "Men like Makhan and Gama Singh were winning the titles while guys like the Harts and Chris Benoit cried about it. I'd never been anything less than a champion before, so I decided to start busting heads."

Suddenly, Holliday was teaming with rulebreakers Gary Albright and Rip Rogers. He eventually purchased Rogers' contract, managing him to the Canadian International title in July 1988. He emerged as one of the sport's best young managers, but Holliday longed to make a name for *himself*.

"So I went and hired the best attorneys in the country," laughed Holliday. "After scouting every organization in the country, we decided the time was right to enter the CWF."

Actually, Holliday's debut was closer to an invasion. His attorneys enabled him to land the job as the color commentator for CWF TV broadcasts—a fact that regular commentators Charlie Platt and Austin Idol didn't even know until Holliday barged onto the set during a January 9 taping!

So far, Holliday has gone undefeated in the CWF, and he's incensing the fans with his outlandish comments about Idol and other fan favorites. He claims that he'll dominate the CWF by wiping out men like Idol and Willie B. Hert.

"Idol better watch out, because he's on the top of my hit list," said Holliday. "Then I'm gonna beat everybody else, and eventually win the Continental belt from that wimpy Tom Prichard. With my background and vast legal resources, nobody's ever gonna be able to stop me!" □

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January 1988/Honky Tonk, Garvin, T.A. career, Arcidi, Hogan.
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 March 1988/Starrcade, Survivor Series, Simpson, Hennig, Zbyszko.
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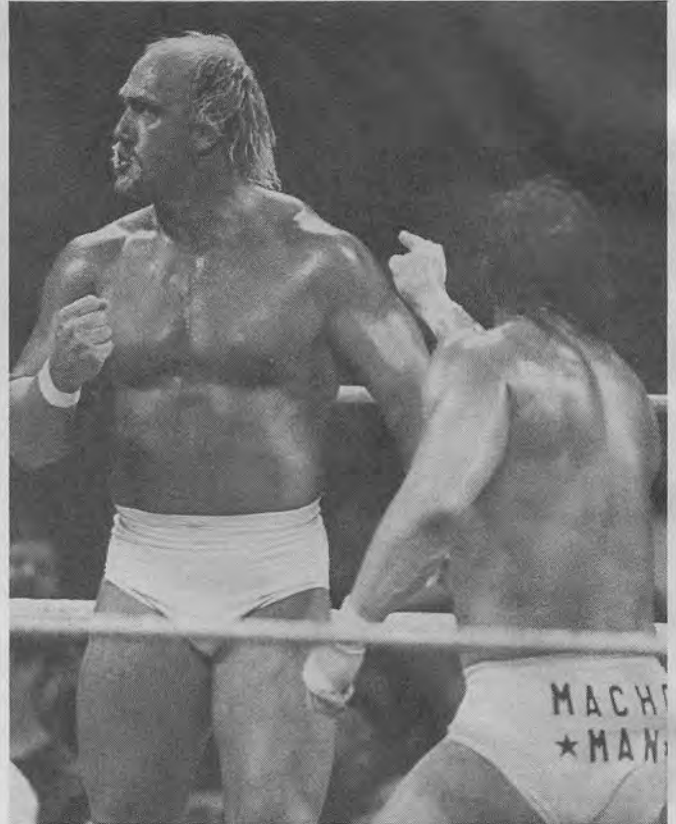
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RANDY SAVAGE & HULK HOGAN

(Continued from page 37)



shock. Everything seemed to be straightened out between Hogan and Savage. Then, prior to the Rumble, Hogan told WWF announcer Mean Gene Okerlund he wouldn't hesitate to go after Savage if necessary. "It's every man for himself, Mean Gene," Hogan said, "and if it comes down to me and the 'Macho Man,' I feel sorry for him."

This was a stunning statement for Hogan, who has spent most of the last year saving Savage from difficult situations. Would Savage have won the World title without Hogan's help? It's doubtful. And when Savage was on the verge of serious injury at the hands of The Honky Tonk Man and The Hart Foundation in late 1987, Hogan came to his rescue.

Certainly, one would've expected Hogan to say of the Rumble, "If it comes down to the both of us, may the best man win. I love Savage like a brother, but I understand that only one man can win,

In the Rumble, Hogan goes after Luke Williams while Brown pursues Savage (above left). Fed up with Savage's accusations, Hogan considers fighting him (above right). Elizabeth tries to convince Savage that Hogan's still a friend (below).



and I hope it's me. In this sport, you always have to try your best to win." Saying that he felt sorry for Savage if it came down to a one-on-one situation was a very strong statement, indeed.

It indicates that Savage was being taken for a fool when he decided to shake hands with Hogan at the Rumble. Hogan probably told Savage he only meant to eliminate Bad News Brown, but



Satisfied that Hogan is on his side, Savage shakes hands. Because the "Macho Man" is so protective of Elizabeth, he often sees threats that don't exist.

his pre-match statements indicate otherwise.

In reality, Hogan was sending a signal to Savage. He was saying, "I want your title, and now I'm ready to come after it. We can still be friends, but when we're in the ring together, it's every man for himself."

But to Savage, saying you want his title is like saying you want his blood. The "Macho Man" cannot be friends with a challenger; it goes against his instincts. Hogan, having been both friend and enemy to Savage, knows this. But because Hogan is so popular with the fans, he doesn't wish to risk their hatred by making the first move. So he's attempting to incite Savage. Let *him* be the bad one in the eyes of the fans.

Make no mistake about it: Hogan *purposely* eliminated Savage at the Rumble. "I am the *real* WWF World champion," Hogan boasted before the match. He then went out and made his message clear.

What will happen now? Well, only one thing *can* happen. We've waited so long for this confrontation, and now we're about to get it. If the feud itself is half as fascinating as the events up to now, fans are in for a treat.

And Savage and Hogan are in for the battle of their lives! ☐

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SPRING 1987

FALL 1988

SPRING 1984/Color pinups: Superstar-Bravo, Adrian Street, Hansen-Race, Valiant-Kabuki. **Stories include:** Warriors, Kerry Von Erich, Bockwinkel, Santana, Hansen.

SUMMER 1984/Color pinups: Patera-Gagne, Windham-Bart, Bundy-Garvin, Koloff-Mosca. **Stories include:** Junkyard Dog, Flair-Race, Adams-Garvin, Snuka, Idol, Orndorff.

FALL 1984/Color pinups: Haynes-Nagasaki, Kabuki-Kamala, Steamboat-Slater, Blanchard-Colon. **Stories include:** Hogan, David Von Erich, Flair-Brody, Blanchard.

WINTER 1984/Color pinups: Michael Hayes, Flair-McDaniel, Gilbert-Rich, Haynes-Funk. **Stories include:** Kerry Von Erich, Martel-Bockwinkel, Piper, Flair-Steamboat.

SPRING 1985/Color pinups: Animal-Funk, Poffo-Gilbert, Nikita-Fernandez, Garvin-McDaniel. **Stories include:** Warriors, Hogan, Albano, Rhodes, Sullivan.

SUMMER 1985/Color pinups: Adams-Kerry Von Erich, Funk-Slater, Nikita-Rhodes. **Stories include:** Valentine, Windham & Rotundo, Warriors, Flair-Race, Nikita.

FALL 1985/Color pinups: Adams-Kerry Von Erich, Zbyszko-Backlund, Lawler-Brody, Blanchard-T.A. **Stories include:** Von Erichs, Warriors, Hogan-Volkoff, Freebirds.

WINTER 1985/Color pinups: Flair-Kerry Von Erich, Hayes-Hawk, Hogan-Fujinami, DiBiase-Roberts. **Stories include:** Orndorff, Warriors, Brody, Shultz, Duggan.

SPRING 1986/Color pinups: Windham-Sullivan, Andre-Bundy, Taylor-Landell, Hernandez-Kerry. **Stories include:** R&R Express, Warriors, Hogan, Santana, Rude, Williams.

SUMMER 1986/Color pinups: Luger-Barr, Garvin-Flair, Nord-Hawk, Missy-Sunshine. **Stories include:** Warriors-Russians, Savage-Hogan, Kevin Von Erich, Bulldogs.

FALL 1986/Color pinups: Kirchner-Volkoff, Nikita-Hawk, Morton-Flair, Nord-Hennig. **Stories include:** R&R Express, Luger, Savage, Bulldogs, Hansen, Rude, Williams.

WINTER 1986/Color pinups: Rude-Von Erich, Khru-shev-Mantel, Hogan-Adonis, Bockwinkel-DeBeers. **Stories include:** Supercards, Hogan, Horsemen, Snuka, Von Erich.

SPRING 1987/Color pinups: Steamboat-Zulu, Roberts-Hillbilly, Morton-Anderson, DiBiase-Hayes. **Stories include:** Bigelow, Flair, Hogan, Luger, Race, Windham, Hyatt.

SUMMER 1987/Color pinups: Roberts-Kamala, Von Erich-Perez, Morton-Koloff, Snuka-Zukhov. **Stories include:** Windham, Elizabeth, Superpowers, Albano, Von Erich.

FALL 1987/Color pinups: Animal-Lane, Bigelow-Inoki, Sullivan-Hall, Ware-Honky Tonk. **Stories include:** Midnights, Flair, Steamboat-Savage, Luger, Piper, Hogan-Andre.

WINTER 1987/Color pinups: Tama-Santana, Perez-Steamboat, Rhodes-Flair, Gordy-Gilbert. **Stories include:** Luger-Nikita, Express, Hart, Hogan, Hyatt, Lawler.

SPRING 1988/Color pinups: Jason-Hart, Konga-Sting, OMG-Santana, Von Erich-Adias. **Stories include:** Warriors, Hogan-Andre, DiBiase, Honky Tonk, T.A., War Games.

SUMMER 1988/Color pinups: Von Erich-Roberts, Sting-Rotundo, Misty-Dallas, Reed-Muraco. **Stories include:** Luger, Hogan, Cornette, Hennig, Bigelow, Hyatt, Rude.

FALL 1988/Color pinups: Santana-Smash, Warlord-Hawk, Adams-Taylor, Hennig-Lawler. **Stories include:** Luger, Hogan, DiBiase, Kerry & Hayes, Sting, Savage.

WINTER 1988/Color pinups: Kerry, Hayes, OMG, Sting, Luger, Idol, Ultimate, Brody. **Stories include:** Sting, Hyatt, Dusty, Roberts, Ultimate, Powers of Pain.

SPRING 1989/Color pinups: Slaughter, Sheik, Andre, Savage, Flair, Steiner, Madusa, Richter. **Stories include:** Savage, Bossman, Sting, Lawler, Hogan, Luger.

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CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

(Continued from page 16)

scored the pin by, as usual, using the ropes.

In other bouts: Road Warrior Animal won a Bunkhouse Stampede ... Jim Cornette won the managers' Bunkhouse Stampede ... Lex Luger, Dusty Rhodes, & Rick Steiner beat The Road Warriors and Paul Ellering.

Tucson, AZ (Correspondent—Reed Alpert): Randy "Macho Man" Savage was due to square off against Big Bossman, but it was announced that Savage was unable to wrestle due to a respiratory ailment. The "Macho Man" left word that his "closest and dearest friend," Hulk Hogan, would take his place.

Hogan was glad for the opportunity to pound Bossman with glee, but Bossman fought Hogan viciously. These two have been going at it violently ever since their first encounter months ago.

As both men battled on the arena floor, the referee began the 10-count. Hogan won the match when he beat the count back in

the ring. Bossman was upset, but the look in his eyes indicated he wasn't done with Hogan at all and was sadistically looking forward to their next match.

In other bouts: Demolition defeated The Powers of Pain ... In a handicap match, Andre the Giant beat Tito Santana & Jim Powers ... The Honky Tonk Man defeated Sam Houston ... The Bushwhackers beat The Bolsheviks ... Curt Hennig defeated Terry Taylor by countout ... Ted DiBiase beat Hercules.

Edmonton, Alberta (Correspondent—Scott Wilde): This match for the Stampede International tag team title pitted champions The British Bulldogs against The Cuban Commandos; it was held inside a steel cage. The Bulldogs took immediate control, tossing the challengers around the cage like a pair of rag dolls. Dynamite Kid whipped The Cuban Assassin into the ropes and executed his famous snap-clothesline. Davey Boy Smith then stunned Jerry Morrow with an awesome powerslam.

The Commandos reversed the momentum by choking Smith and twice hoisting up Dynamite Kid and ramming his head into the cage wall. The challengers dominated the match until Davey Boy reversed a suplex attempt by Morrow into a small package and pinned him to win the match and retain the title. It would be one of their last successful title defenses, however, as the Bulldogs would lose the belts to Makhan and Vulkan Singh just a few weeks later.

In other bouts: Don Muraco defeated Makhan Singh ... Chris Benoit pinned Leo Burke ... Steve Blackman defeated Johnny Smith by DQ ... Steve DiSalvo thrashed Vulkan Singh ... Beef

Wellington downed Goldie Rogers ... Larry Cameron destroyed Tom Ferrara.

Asheville, NC (Correspondent—Darnell Pickett): Before the beginning of this bout between Ted DiBiase and Hercules, DiBiase made disparaging comments about his opponent. Incensed, Hercules charged down the aisle and jumped into the ring, ferociously swinging his chain at DiBiase.



Ted DiBiase whips Hercules across the ring. The "Million-Dollar Man" actually tried to buy Hercules from Bobby Heenan!

At the opening bell, Virgil distracted Hercules while DiBiase pounded him. The "Million-Dollar Man" dominated the first five minutes of the match. Then Hercules retaliated with a series of punches. He tried to clothesline DiBiase, but the referee got in the way and was knocked down. The match continued, however.

When Virgil got up on the ring apron, Hercules went after him, allowing DiBiase to sneak up and knee Hercules in the back. As DiBiase went for the cover, the referee recovered and made the three-count.

In other bouts: Tully Blanchard & Arn Anderson defeated The Rockers ... Hacksaw Duggan beat Dino Bravo ... Sam Houston beat Steve Lombardi ... The Warlord defeated Boris Zukhov. □



Big Bossman crunches Hulk Hogan with a bearhug. Their feud started after Bossman beat Hogan with his nightstick.

YOU ASKED US

(Continued from page 18)

title, but we were fighting on the side of evil. Now we're all fighting for good in the NWA, but we're also all doing our own thing. I'd love to see what the three of us could do together. We'd make life pretty difficult for The Varsity Club and the Horsemen, wouldn't we? Even now, whenever Rick needs some help against the Club, he can count on me. And since we're all getting shots at Ric Flair's World title, I think one of us is gonna win that belt, too."

Q: "I have a question for Greg Gagne: Now that you've regained the AWA TV title from Ronnie Garvin, will you go after the World title? I think you could win it if you put your mind to it."—Pamela Bentsen, Ann Arbor, MI

A: "Thank you for the vote of confidence, Pamela," Gagne said. "It's always nice to know you have the fans behind you. Defending the TV title will be a demanding task. There are always a lot of top challengers; men like Col. DeBeers and Manny Fernandez are up there

now. Then, as time permits, I'd like to get some shots at the World title. Wouldn't you if your name were Gagne? My father set a standard for championship excellence nobody has matched. I've actually won that belt several times, but some way or another it was always given back to my opponent."

Q: "This question is for Gen. Skandor Akbar: Where did you get this Botswana Beast? He looks just like Kamala and he's twice as vicious."—Tony Stark, Macon, GA

A: "You idiot!" Akbar screamed. "Where do you think he's from, Italy? He's not called the Botswana Beast because he's from Switzer-



The Botswana Beast, managed by Gen. Skandor Akbar, digs his fingers into Terry Gordy's back. The Beast resembles Kamala in appearance and demeanor.

land, is he? I have scouts all over this globe searching for the kind of talent that will win me every championship in the sport. My success cannot be denied. The Botswana Beast represents one more step in my plan for World Class domination. Let us only hope that in the future, your questions will demonstrate a higher degree of intelligence. You remind me of those cretins I am forced to listen to at the arenas."

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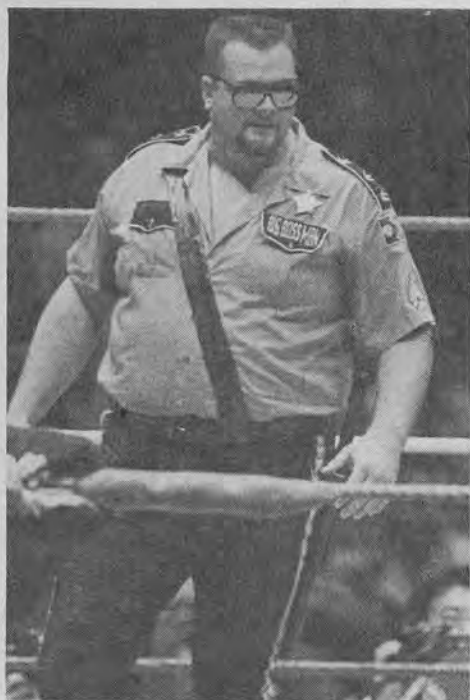
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Greg Gagne yanks on Ronnie Garvin's arm on his way to regaining the AWA TV title at SuperClash III. Gagne is also a top contender for the World belt.

Wrestler^{THE}



Big Bossman

TOP 10

- 1 RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL
WWF World champion
- 2 RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
NWA World champion
- 3 JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
World Class champion
- 4 HULK HOGAN**
302, Venice Beach, CA
No. 3 contender: WWF title
- 5 BARRY WINDHAM**
263, Sweetwater, TX
U.S. heavyweight champion
- 6 STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
No. 2 contender: NWA title
- 7 THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
280, Queens, NY
WWF Intercontinental champion
- 8 LEX LUGER**
268, Chicago, IL
No. 4 contender: NWA title
- 9 KERRY VON ERICH**
260, Denton, TX
No. 2 contender: AWA & WCCW titles
- 10 BIG BOSSMAN**
348, Cobb County, GA
No. 2 contender: WWF title

TAG TEAMS

- 1 THE ROAD WARRIORS**
Combined weight: 567 pounds
NWA World tag team champions
- 2 DEMOLITION**
Combined weight: 585 pounds
WWF World tag team champions
- 3 STAN LANE & BOBBY EATON**
Combined weight: 462 pounds
No. 2 contenders: NWA tag team title
- 4 WARLORD & BARBARIAN**
Combined weight: 655 pounds
No. 1 contenders: WWF tag team title
- 5 PAT TANAKA & PAUL DIAMOND**
Combined weight: 456 pounds
AWA World tag team champions
- 6 STEVE WILLIAMS & KEVIN SULLIVAN**
Combined weight: 517 pounds
U.S. tag team champions
- 7 THE SAMOAN SWAT TEAM**
Combined weight: 510 pounds
World Class tag team champions
- 8 DENNIS CONDREY & RANDY ROSE**
Combined weight: 461 pounds
No. 3 contenders: NWA tag team title
- 9 ROBERT FULLER & JIMMY GOLDEN**
Combined weight: 473 pounds
CWA tag team champions
- 10 TULLY BLANCHARD & ARN ANDERSON**
Combined weight: 484 pounds
No. 2 contenders: WWF tag team title

NWA

World Champion:
RIC FLAIR

243, Minneapolis, MN

- 1—BARRY WINDHAM**
263, Sweetwater, TX
- 2—RICK STEAMBOAT**
238, Honolulu, HI
- 3—STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
- 4—EDDIE GILBERT**
222, Lexington, TN
- 5—RICK STEINER**
248, Detroit, MI
- 6—LEX LUGER**
268, Chicago, IL
- 7—JUNKYARD DOG**
305, Charlotte, NC
- 8—MIKE ROTUNDO**
245, Syracuse, NY
- 9—MICHAEL HAYES**
255, Marietta, GA
- 10—BUTCH REED**
265, Kansas City, MO

WWF

World Champion:
RANDY SAVAGE

245, Sarasota, FL

- 1—THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
280, Queens, NY
- 2—BIG BOSSMAN**
348, Cobb County, GA
- 3—HULK HOGAN**
302, Venice Beach, CA
- 4—AKEEM**
468, Chicago, IL
- 5—GREG VALENTINE**
243, Seattle, WA
- 6—BAD NEWS BROWN**
280, New York, NY
- 7—ANDRE THE GIANT**
497, Grenoble, France
- 8—HACKSAW DUGGAN**
280, Glens Falls, NY
- 9—CURT HENNIG**
235, Minneapolis, MN
- 10—JOHN STUDD**
364, Los Angeles, CA

AWA

World Champion:
TITLE VACANT

(See "Ratings Analysis")

- 1—GREG GAGNE**
220, Robbinsdale, MN
- 2—KERRY VON ERICH**
260, Denton, TX
- 3—DON MURACO**
274, Sunset Beach, HI
- 4—WAHOO McDANIEL**
280, Midland, TX
- 5—MANNY FERNANDEZ**
245, El Paso, TX
- 6—SGT. SLAUGHTER**
310, Parris Island, SC
- 7—THE IRON SHEIK**
263, Teheran, Iran
- 8—LARRY ZBYSZKO**
248, Pittsburgh, PA
- 9—COL. DeBEERS**
248, Cape Town, South Africa
- 10—PAT TANAKA**
265, Tokyo, Japan

WORLD CLASS

World Class Champion:
JERRY LAWLER

234, Memphis, TN

- 1—ICEMAN PARSONS**
245, St. Louis, MO
- 2—KERRY VON ERICH**
260, Denton, TX
- 3—ERIC EMBRY**
225, Lexington, KY
- 4—JEFF JARRETT**
200, Hendersonville, TN
- 5—CACTUS JACK**
242, Truth or Consequences, NM
- 6—KEVIN VON ERICH**
235, Denton, TX
- 7—SUPER BLACK NINJA**
245, Tokyo, Japan
- 8—BRICKHOUSE BROWN**
225, Winter Haven, FL
- 9—JIMMY JACK FUNK**
243, Portland, OR
- 10—GARY YOUNG**
240, Houston, TX

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings.

MOST POPULAR

- 1 HULK HOGAN**
302, Venice Beach, CA
Last month: No. 1 Most Popular
- 2 RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL
Last month: No. 2 Most Popular
- 3 STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
Last month: No. 3 Most Popular
- 4 THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
280, Queens, NY
Last month: No. 4 Most Popular
- 5 RICK STEINER**
248, Detroit, MI
Last month: No. 6 Most Popular
- 6 LEX LUGER**
268, Chicago, IL
Last month: No. 5 Most Popular
- 7 RICK STEAMBOAT**
238, Honolulu, HI
Last month: unrated
- 8 HACKSAW DUGGAN**
280, Glens Falls, NY
Last month: No. 9 Most Popular
- 9 DUSTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
Last month: No. 7 Most Popular
- 10 KERRY VON ERICH**
260, Denton, TX
Last month: No. 10 Most Popular

MOST HATED

- 1 BIG BOSSMAN**
348, Cobb County, GA
Last month: No. 1 Most Hated
- 2 RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
Last month: No. 2 Most Hated
- 3 BARRY WINDHAM**
263, Sweetwater, TX
Last month: No. 3 Most Hated
- 4 AKEEM**
468, Chicago, IL
Last month: unrated
- 5 ANDRE THE GIANT**
497, Grenoble, France
Last month: No. 4 Most Hated
- 6 MIKE ROTUNDO**
245, Syracuse, NY
Last month: No. 7 Most Hated
- 7 STEVE WILLIAMS**
265, Norman, OK
Last month: No. 10 Most Hated
- 8 BAD NEWS BROWN**
280, New York, NY
Last month: No. 6 Most Hated
- 9 RICK MORTON**
228, Memphis, TN
Last month: unrated
- 10 ICEMAN PARSONS**
245, St. Louis, MO
Last month: No. 9 Most Hated

For period ended January 31, 1989

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of those issues—in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only—and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a number-one rating, nine for a number-two ranking, and so on down to one point for a number-10 rating. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, allowing a maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| 1—RANDY SAVAGE | 97 points |
| 2—RIC FLAIR | 92 points |
| 3—JERRY LAWLER | 73 points |
| 4—LEX LUGER | 59 points |
| 5—STING | 45 points |

TAG TEAMS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1—THE ROAD WARRIORS | 89 points |
| 2—DEMOLITION | 87 points |
| 3—STAN LANE & BOBBY EATON | 72 points |
| 4—PAT TANAKA & PAUL DIAMOND | 56 points |
| 5—TULLY BLANCHARD & ARN ANDERSON ... | 52 points |

STAMPEDE

North American Champion:
DON MURACO

274, Sunset Beach, HI

- 1—CHRIS BENOIT**
218, Edmonton, Alberta
- 2—LARRY CAMERON**
280, Chicago
- 3—JOHNNY SMITH**
235, Manchester, England
- 4—MAKHAN SINGH**
380, Saginaw, MI
- 5—STEVE DISALVO**
298, Boston, MA
- 6—VULKAN SINGH**
300, Billings, MT
- 7—STEVE BLACKMAN**
250, Pittsburgh, PA
- 8—BEEF WELLINGTON**
225, Lloydminster, Alberta
- 9—GAMA SINGH**
220, Karachi, Pakistan
- 10—RON RITCHIE**
228, St. Louis, MO

CWA

CWA Champion:
DUTCH MANTEL

224, Oil Trough, TX

- 1—JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
- 2—JEFF JARRETT**
200, Hendersonville, TN
- 3—RICK MORTON**
228, Memphis, TN
- 4—BILL DUNDEE**
214, Melbourne, Australia
- 5—ROBERT FULLER**
255, Dyresburg, TN
- 6—TRACEY SMOTHERS**
228, Springfield, TN
- 7—FRANK LANCASTER**
239, Atlanta, GA
- 8—JIMMY GOLDEN**
235, Montgomery, AL
- 9—KEN WAYNE**
208, Memphis, TN
- 10—PHIL HICKERSON**
208, Memphis, TN

CONTINENTAL

Continental Champion:
TOM PRICHARD

220, Houston, TX

- 1—DAN DAVIS**
238, Nashville, TN
- 2—TERRY GORDY**
289, Chattanooga, TN
- 3—MOONDOG SPOT**
303, parts unknown
- 4—TONY ANTHONY**
235, Bucksnorth, TN
- 5—MASA CHONO**
250, Tokyo, Japan
- 6—MIKE DAVIS**
238, Pensacola, FL
- 7—WENDELL COOLEY**
220, Milton, FL
- 8—BLACK BART**
261, Pampa, TX
- 9—DOUG FURNAS**
265, Commerce, OK
- 10—BILL DUNDEE**
214, Melbourne, AUS

FLORIDA

FCW Champion:
MIKE GRAHAM

232, Tampa, FL

- 1—AL PEREZ**
238, Tampa, FL
- 2—DUSTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
- 3—DICK SLATER**
235, Tampa, FL
- 4—STEVE KEIRN**
235, Tampa, FL
- 5—U.S. STEEL**
407, Pittsburgh, PA
- 6—THE TERMINATOR**
270, Chicago, IL
- 7—DICK MURDOCH**
280, Waxahachie, TX
- 8—JOHNNY ACE**
250, San Bernadino, CA
- 9—MARK STARR**
228, Sarasota, FL
- 10—BRETT SAWYER**
232, Portland, OR

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating more than 135 wrestlers in 12 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

Bad news for Jerry Lawler. "The King" is no longer king of the AWA. On January 20, AWA officials announced that Lawler had been officially stripped of the AWA World title for missing seven mandatory title defenses. And, in a shocking development, Lawler has been banned from the AWA—for life!

Lawler, who won his first World title with a victory over **Curt Hennig** on May 9, 1988, added the World Class belt to his collection by defeating **Kerry Von Erich** on December 13, 1988, at SuperClash III. He continues to hold the WCCW belt at press time; meanwhile, AWA officials were working on arrangements for a World title tournament.

The AWA's announcement ended 10 days of turmoil in the federation. On January 10 in Memphis, Lawler apparently lost both the AWA and World Class belts to **Dutch Mantel**, thanks to a controversial officiating job by guest referee **Rick Morton**. Morton, a longtime enemy of Mantel's, surprisingly turned against Lawler and cost him the match.

With 15 minutes expired, Lawler prepared to pounce on Mantel, who was backed into the ropes. Morton, however, held back Lawler's arms, giving Mantel the opportunity to floor Lawler with a punch. He covered him twice, but each time Lawler put his foot on the rope at the two-count. The third time this happened, Morton knocked Lawler's foot off the rope and finished the three-count.

Afterward, Lawler went into the dressing room and saw Mantel patting Morton on the back. Morton also had a large sum of money in his hands. Lawler filed a protest, after which CWA, AWA, and World Class officials reviewed the tapes. It was ruled that Morton acted with bias toward Mantel, and the decision was overturned. Morton was also fined \$5,000 for biased officiating.

"Mr. Lawler seemed very interested in retaining the World title, so it confuses me why he'd give it up so easily," AWA President **Stanley Blackburn** said. "He must have known that we wouldn't take such a dire offense as missing title defenses so lightly. The rules clearly state that he must defend his belt at least once a month, which he has, but he must also appear for additional defenses when scheduled."

AWA TV champ **Greg Gagne** and **Kerry Von Erich** are the two top contenders for the World title. Lawler will not be allowed to enter the tournament.

Tracking Trends. This is the second edition of our monthly feature, which will note important monthly changes in the ratings.

Hulk Hogan continues to move up in the Top 10 ratings. The "Hulkster" appears to be on the verge of a match against WWF World champion **Randy Savage** and has been

wrestling harder and more often. Since last issue, Hogan moves up two spots to number four ... **Sting** took NWA World champ **Ric Flair** to a one-hour draw; with **Lex Luger** no longer getting title shots, Sting moves up two spots to number six ... **Big Bossman** is the new top contender for Savage's title and enters the Top 10 ratings at number 10.

Warlord and **Barbarian** have unleashed an assault on **Demolition's** WWF World tag belts and climb two notches in the tag team rankings to number four ... **Pat Tanaka** and **Paul Diamond** defend their AWA World tag belts infrequently against a narrow variety of opponents; they drop two spots to number five ... **Tully Blanchard** and **Arn Anderson** move in at number 10 thanks in part to a victory over **The Rockers**; Tully and Arn are also outstanding all-around wrestlers.

Rick Steamboat, now the top contender for the NWA World title, moves into the NWA ratings at number two. Steamboat is not in the overall Top 10 because, at press time, he had only wrestled a few matches ... **Lex Luger** continues to drop, in large part because Flair has continued to deny Luger title shots. The "Total Package" drops five spots to number seven ... **Michael Hayes** (number nine) and **Butch Reed** (number 10) recently returned to the NWA.

Akeem is also going after Savage's WWF World title and enters the ratings at number four ... **Greg Valentine** has become the number-one contender for **The Ultimate Warrior's** Intercontinental title and moves in at number five ... **Bad News Brown** failed to win the World title and drops four spots to number six ... **The Honky Tonk Man** has dropped out of I-C title contention and our ratings ... **John Studd** won the Royal Rumble, earning him the bottom spot.

What a lineup! That was our first reaction while compiling Florida Championship Wrestling ratings for this month's revolving ratings category. With the likes of **Al Perez**, **Dusty Rhodes**, **Dick Slater**, and **Dick Murdoch** in the FCW top 10, there are exciting times ahead for the Sunshine State. All four men spent a good part of their careers in Florida and are well-known to wrestling fans there. Current FCW champ **Mike Graham** won his title from **The Terminator** on December 25 in Tampa.

That's all, folks. But we'd love to hear what you think about the Lawler situation and anything else related to our ratings. Send your comments to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o *The Wrestler*; Box 48; Rockville Centre, NY 11571. □



Rick Steamboat

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